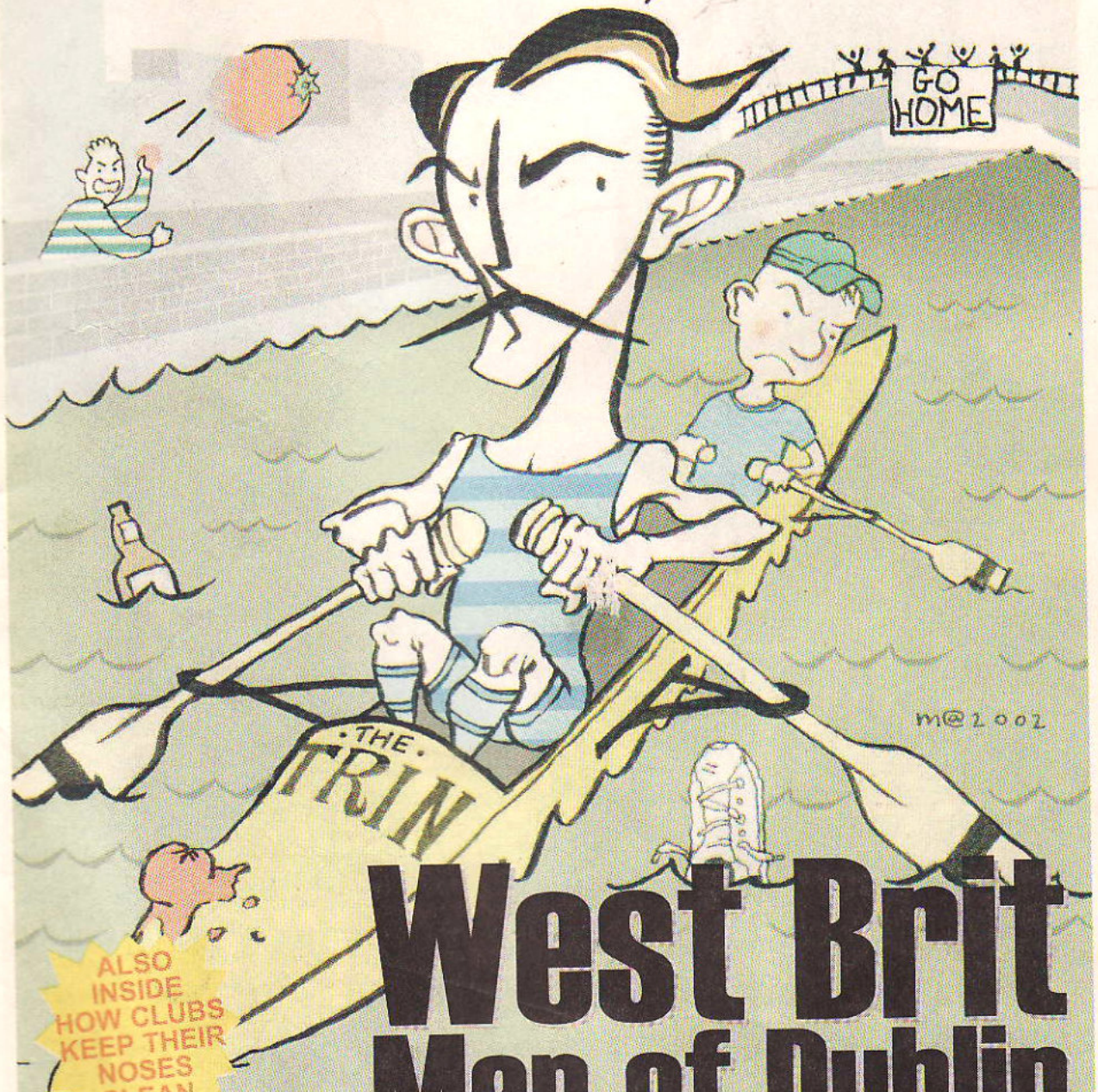
April 2002

The Slate

SO CHEAP IT'S FREE!

UNLUCKY NO. 13

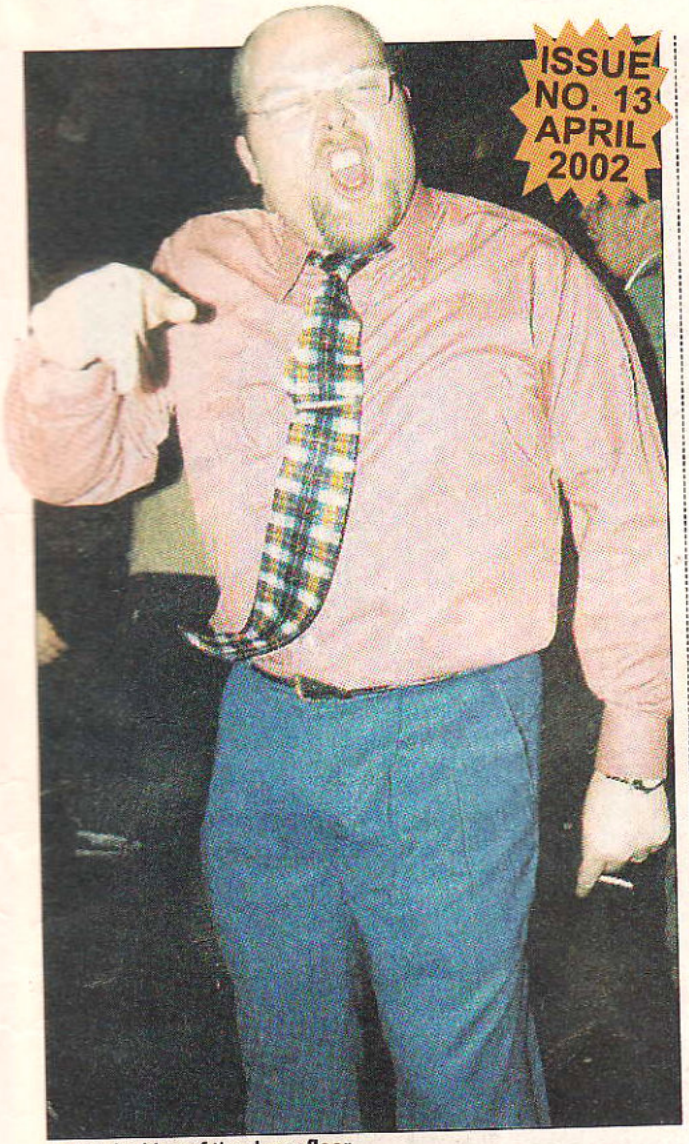


ALSO INSIDE HOW CLUBS KEEP THEIR NOSES CLEAN

MORE NEWS ON BLACKS IN THE JACKS... HOW TO MAKE MONEY OUT OF SEPTEMBER 11TH

West Brit Map of Dublin

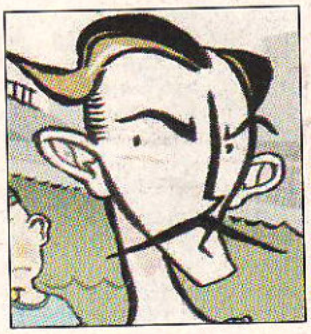
Where can a decent Prod go to escape the bloody rabble?



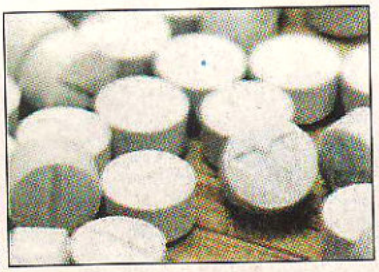
Percy the king of the dancefloor

IT'S THE SLATE'S WEST BRIT MAP OF DUBLIN. . . 8

Dilapidated former members of the Ascendancy are to be found in all sorts of pockets and ratholes around the city. Whether you are trying to avoid them like the plague, or track them down because they are your only friends, our map is the essential West Brit-tracking tool.



THE SMOOTH FACE OF DUBLIN CLUBBING 16



In the final part of our clubbing feature, we have a look at hypocritical media treatment of club culture and the idea that Dublin clubs have in some way cleaned up their act.

CLUB CLOSING TIMES - WOULD A NEW GOVERNMENT MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE? 10

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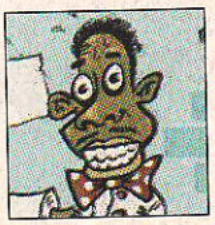
WE REVIEW THEIR WEBSITES

Because we're too poor to actually eat in them



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THE BLACKHOLE

MORE BLACKS IN THE JACKS ...6
It's still going on. We give you some lowdown on lavatory attendants.

SPAZ GUIDE ...10
Hot Press are celebrating 25 years of boring righteousness. How long before their entire readership dies of old age?

SLIDE INTO SHITE ...12
A new series featuring famous people who are really fucked. This month it's Conrad Gallagher's turn.

MAY ISSUE OF THE SLATE OUT WHENEVER WE FEEL LIKE IT

Moronic Mumba Attacks The Slate

WE WERE all delighted here in the Slate offices when news filtered through that Sexy Samantha Mumba was having a spastic attack over our recent coverage of her. The poor girl took a turn for the worse when she picked up her copy of The Slate and saw that we had attributed some completely fictitious quotes to her.

According to our article, Samantha was glad that African immigrants were being "kept out of sight down in the toilets, where they belong."

"That's pathetic," raged the real Samantha in a cutting RTE Guide interview. "I'm not impressed by that at all. If you wanna push your magazine, do it in a half-decent way; don't make up rubbish about other people." Thankfully, Sam will soon be leaving Ireland to live in Los Angeles.

Cheer u
Sar

Complaint of the month

dear editor,
I wonder who is the f***ing idiot who wrote those things about bono...(march issue) whoever is this ignorant I would like to say to him (her) that this is the most ridiculous thing I have ever read...
it would be a great thing if you had just a milionth part of bono's intelligence...but unfortunately I suppose you speak just because you' ve got a mouth to do it....
lyz

Lyz wins a lifetime subscription to The Slate and a special prize of one free copy of HotPress for trying to defend Bono

If you have a complaint to make, why not send it in to totalassholes@theslate.ie

Bono the radical revolutionary

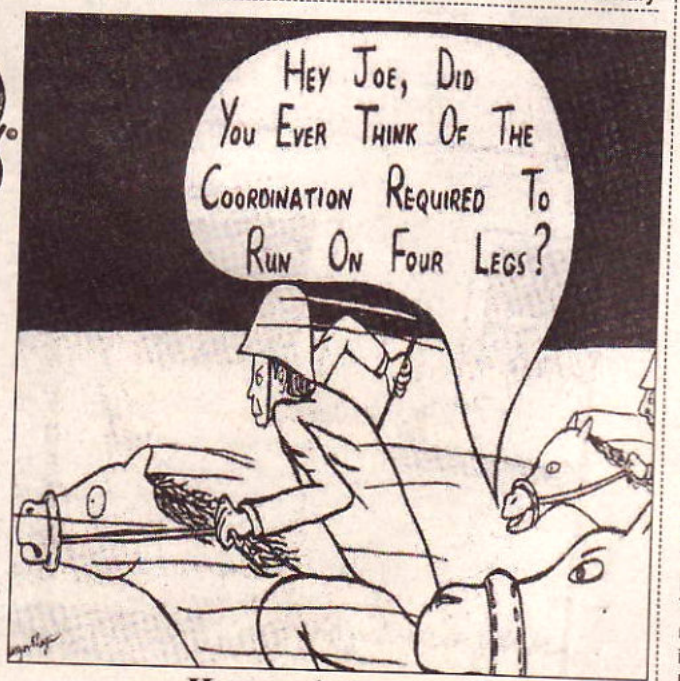
BITTER 2FM DJ GETS IN ON THE ACT

Will someone please lock this man up?

Crap 2FM DJ Mr. Spring has developed a strange obsession with this magazine. The man's website is now regularly punctuated by breathless reports about yet another mention he has received in The Slate. Take the following, for example: "i got a record-breaking *2* slags in it this issue! Unfortunatly they are pretty limp digs at best, i do wish they`d come up with something a little more articulate then calling me a "muppet" and a "media whore", that's not even insulting kids!!" Crazy. And then he fires off on another confusing diatribe against The Slate - like this for example: "It`s as rammer-jammer-packed with Typos, Bitching and the ill-informed rantings of everybody`s favorite frustrated, impotant Young Unemployables as ever!!" Righto Springer - back to the nuthouse now please you fucking fruitcake.

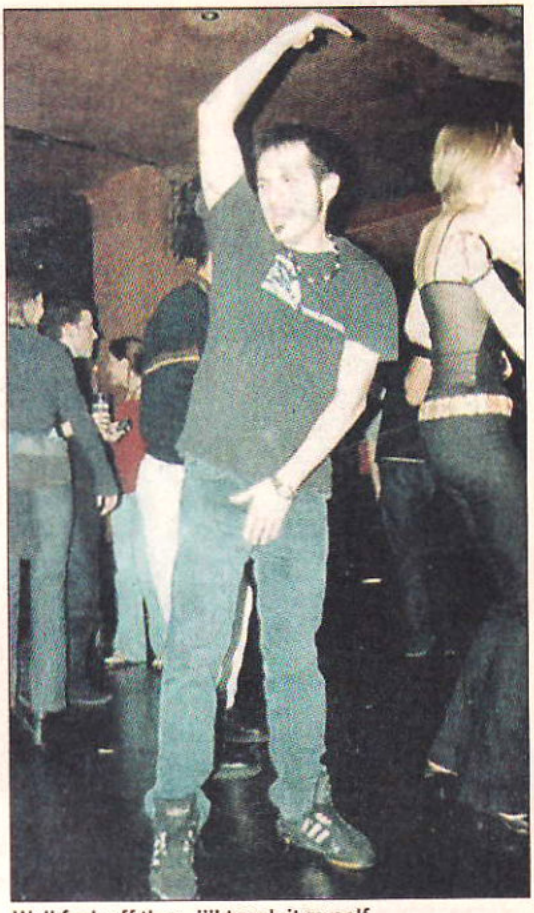
THE WEE HOURS

BY MORGAN O'REGAN



Horse mind games

And then when I'd finished with your Ma and your sister, in walks your Da, as horny as hell . . .



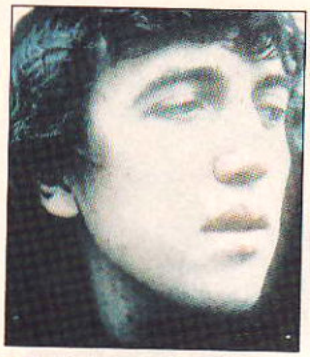
Well fuck off then, I'll touch it myself

Gary's 'Will suck cock, it won't hurt, have no teeth' lonely hearts advert had finally found a taker

The perils of dressing in the dark

"MY LIFE WITH INCONTINENT GIRLFRIEND"

Douglas suddenly realised why Henrietta, his hairy wife, wasn't getting pregnant



David in the middle of his joint-smoking hell

KITT HIT BY DESPERATE TABLOID

SINGER'S 'DRUG CONFESSION' EMBLAZONED ACROSS IRELAND ON SUNDAY FRONT PAGE

Ireland's worst Sunday newspaper were so stuck for a front page story a couple of weeks back they decided to break the news that hippy singer-songwriter David Kitt had once tried cannabis. In this shocking expose, the bloodhounds in Ireland On Sunday revealed how Kitt had smoked a joint before performing at a recent gig of his. Not content with this massive scoop alone, they then made a tremendous fuss over the fact that David Kitt's father is Tom Kitt, TD. "Minister's son's drug confession" ran the clumsy headline, much to the bemusement of the general public. Who gives a fuck? The whole thing is probably down to the fact that IOS has recently been bought by the Daily Mail - a bunch of hyper-moralising British fucks.

The Results Are Just In!

AND AS USUAL THE TOP ASSHOLES IN TOWN HAVE BEEN GIVEN SMIRNOFF DANCE MUSIC AWARDS

THE ANNUAL Smirnoff Awards have thankfully been and gone, and as expected, there was plenty of backslapping, product promotion and whoring on the night. The awards were billed as "the event of the clubbing calendar", but this contention was undermined somewhat by the fact that, at the last minute, Smirnoff had to offload obscene amounts of invites to members of the dance community in order to ensure a reasonable turnout.

The ceremony was held in the squalid confines of the Ambassador theatre, which, according to the press release "was dressed up to re-create the vibe of a warehouse party". This aim was skilfully achieved by providing Smirnoff Ice on tap - a feature at all proper warehouse raves - and hiring a host of B-list celebrity assholes to hang around and try and look famous.

While everybody who attended concentrated on getting as drunk as possible, the awards were presented and, as usual, it seems that Pat Kenny or possibly some member of Youth Defence had been asked to pick the winners. The only surprise this year was that Dublin DJ Johnny Moy didn't win best DJ. That was reserved for some culchie called DJ Ted, with everybody taking a quick moment out from their boozing to jeer loudly when his name was called out. While these awards - allegedly set up to recognise excellence in the Irish club scene - usually have about as much credibility as the recent Zimbabwe elections, things were taken to a new level of farce this year. A special mention for blatant hypocrisy should go to the Sunday World, who recently printed a hysterical feature on how Dublin's clubs are dangerous hellholes filled with deadly drugs - then jumped on board a few weeks later to co-sponsor this event.

The only person deserving of any genuine congratulations on the night was MTV presenter Danann Breathnach for keeping a straight face when announcing that 2FM had won best dance radio station. Unsurprisingly, Smirnoff declared the whole fiasco 'a great success', and indeed they must be happy seeing as they managed to get their logo in every low-life tabloid paper the next day.

Fines System to Stop Blaggards

Now that the Brits have introduced on the spot fines for bad behaviour, it's high time we Irish followed suit and made people pay up for their misdemeanours. Public order cannot be maintained unless the Gardai are allowed to line their pockets by catching blatant wrongdoers and refusing to let them go until a suitable sum has been handed over. These Brave Boys in Blue will, of course, be allowed to charge whatever they want, but we have put some ballpark figures together so that you can know what to expect if you go out with trouble in mind.

- Queueing up outside Spi in ¾ length trousers €200
- Hiring a rickshaw and then producing a whip once on board €50
- Trying to swim across the Liffey in an Ireland jersey €100
- Drowning a pigeon in your vomit €50
- Playing the bongos on Grafton St. with the rhythmic skills of a buckled wheel €500

However, a bonus scheme will be set up whereby you can earn back your fines by carrying out the following civic-minded acts:

- Putting used condoms in the Dubliner magazine's letterbox on Wicklow St. (number 23)
- Setting fire to yourself and running into Lillies Bordello with a can of petrol in either hand

HELP OUT WITH THE SLATE

We are looking for people with nasty personalities and time on their hands to contribute articles and ideas to this magazine. Email editor@theslate.ie with 'mailing list' as the subject. You will then receive a list of content ideas from us every week or two.

How Forgetful

Former VIP publisher John Ryan is fond of telling newspapers about how he can reinvent his personality whenever the fancy takes him. Unfortunately, none of the personalities he has come up with so far have been remotely appealing to anyone else, and it seems that his last attempt was equally unsatisfactory - even to him. "I wanted to reinvent myself," he announced back in October. "I didn't want to be Mr. VIP. I'm not that velvet rope kind of guy." But it now seems that life on the wrong side of the velvet rope was too much of a trial for Ryan. His latest publishing venture is the utterly dire Stars on Sunday - a weekly newspaper with no content except a few thousand photographs of PR people and county councilors.

Mystery Man John Ryan

Proof that The Revs Really are Complete Knobs

There has always been a suspicion that Ireland's worst ever pop punk band are a bunch of dicks. A readers email confirmed to The Slate that this is indeed the case. "A mate of mine went to a party at their [the Revs] gaff in Crumlin, the party consisted of i kid you not an awful karaoke machine which conked out after 5 songs, much to the joy of my mate who said the revs were hogging it, anyhoo, the main point of this rubbish party was that anyone who tried to skin up was asked to leave by one of those arseholes." Thanks a lot for that Jim. If anyone else has any stories send them in to editor@theslate.ie.

Blacks in the Jacks: We Reveal the Truth

IT'S NO WAGES, NO FUN AND SOME BIG TIME GEEZER PULLING STRINGS IN THE BACKGROUND

In spite of The Slate's valiant attempts to put an end to it, the Blacks in the Jacks industry still seems to be flourishing in Dublin's shitter pubs. Undeterred, we hit the streets again to discover how exactly this industry operates.

One striking thing is that it is seems to be quite organised, with at least one agency orchestrating affairs in the background and supplying a number of pubs with black toilet attendants. Another notable feature is that practically none of these bog minders are paid a flat wage of any sort. Instead they rely completely on tips from whatever patronising cunts happen to pass through their jacks in a generous humour.

Of the fifteen pubs and clubs we rang, several claimed that they paid their attendants a wage. But it seemed like they were lying when we went around the pubs and asked the attendants themselves. Most of them said that the only money they got was from tips.

A couple of clubs were a bit less tight-lipped and, from what they said, it would seem that most Blacks in the Jacks find work through an agency of some sort. Tomato and the Pod both said that they used a company called Express Services, who are supplying at least seven or eight bars around town. Express Services seems to be run by one African man who supplies the toiletries and makes the initial approach to the bar or club.

It is not entirely clear how this chap receives payment for his brokering service. The most likely answer is that, when the pubs and clubs say they are paying their toilet attendants, what they actually mean is that they are paying a 'rental' fee to the agency. Meanwhile, the miserable Blacks in the Jacks are left to bow, scrape and smile for whatever tips they can get.

UPROAR OVER HAWTIN PRICE HIKE

HEINEKEN SPONSOR AN EVENT AND - HEY PRESTO! - THE TICKETS ARE 28% DEARER

THERE WAS outcry in clubland recently when greedy Irish promoters MCD were called offside for trying to slip an outrageous price-hike past everyone for the upcoming Richie Hawtin techno gig. Hawtin (right) sold out The Ambassador a few months ago, and fans were delighted to hear that he would be making a return visit to the same venue in May - until they saw the €32 door tax. This constitutes a €7 increase on the previous ticket price.

MCD were quick to point the finger straight at Hawtin, saying the price increase was "directly linked to the increase in his fee from the last time he played here". But seeing as Hawtin will sell out the 1,000 capacity Ambassador again, that means they are claiming that his fee has gone up by €7,000 euros over a few short months. Very suspicious!

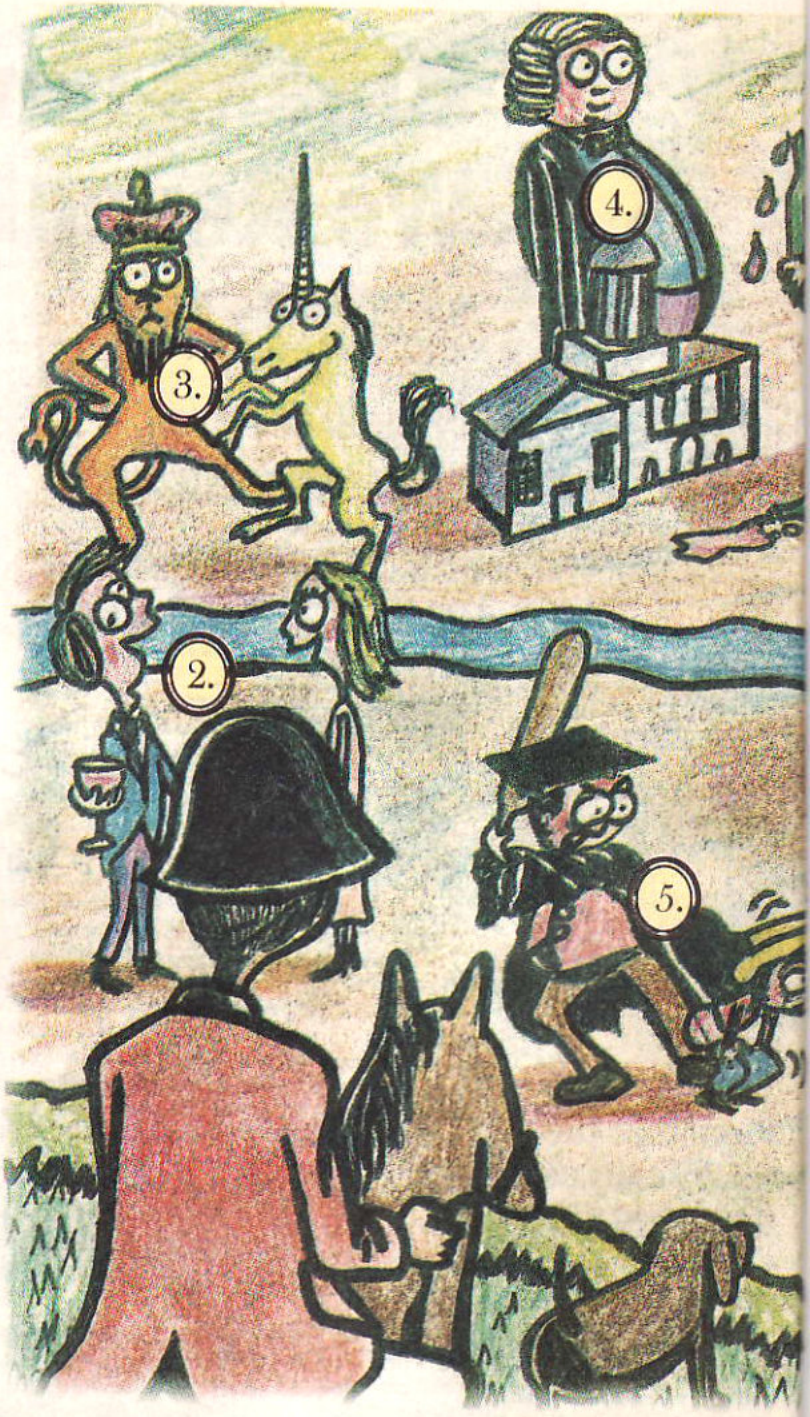
However, what really made it look like MCD boss Denis Desmond was planning to buy a fleet of Rolls Royces for his next birthday is the fact that the event is being given some serious sponsorship by Heineken, which must be helping MCD deal with Richie's increased fees.

After a huge ballyhoo was kicked up on the irish dance whinging forum, IE-Dance, MCD generously cut the price by two euro - a move which for absolute stinginess will remain unmatched for decades to come. Bravo MCD!

In a city crowded with local Philistines, Wes

West Brit map of Dublin

WE HAVE LOCATED ALL THE MOST COLONISED SPOTS IN THE CAPITAL CITY



1. Trinity College

IN RECENT times this great institution has been diluted somewhat by an influx of commoners and foreigners. But the disciplines of ponceing about, falling asleep at lectures and pretending to know what you're talking about are still being kept alive behind the walls of Dublin University. The thirsty West-Brit can always stop by and slake his thirst in the glorious Pavilion Bar, while famed jock secret society the Knights of the Campanile run by with planks of lit timber sticking out of their arses.

2. The House

THE HOUSE is a failed Westbrit social club that was set up a few months ago beside Dublin Castle to indulge the elitist pretensions of some of the city's most annoying assholes. The intention was to hold a monthly drinking club where delusional members could prance about, talk in loud posh accents without getting beaten up, and generally pretend that they were part of some kind of turn-of-the-century intellectual movement. Unfortunately, the effect was ruined by large numbers of normal Irish people turning up and standing around, not knowing how to behave in front of the West Brits.

3. Dublin Zoo

THERE WAS always a great hullabaloo when the victorious Brits returned home from plundering exotic lands, raping women and trying to impose stupid religious notions on people who were better off without them. The excitement was added to by the strange animals that were brought back as trophies and put in Zoos so that uneducated people could come and stare at them moping about in their cages. In a particularly cruel move, they founded a Zoo in Ireland, probably the wettest, most miserable island on earth. Eighty or so years after we finally chased the bastards off our land, Dublin Zoo is still there, full of suicidal creatures that have been sitting in the pissing rain for years, being pelted with sweets and coins by children who are anxious to get home to continue playing computer games.

4. King's Inns

AS THE sole barrister school in the country, 'The Inns' makes trainee lawyers perform a number of sadistic West British fantasies which would even turn the stomach of Oliver Cromwell. Before they qualify, aspiring wig-wearers must dine at 'commons' at least ten times a year. This custom originated years ago when there were no formal exams for barristers, and they learned their trade by talking shi with the big boys over dinner. Why this senseless rule is employed nowa days is anybody's guess, but to make matters worse, every time a young barrister wants to go to the jacks, he has to get a waiter to go up to the table of the head West Brits, known a Benchers, and get him to ask their permission for him. Definitely one of the most ridiculous West Brit customs still in operation in Ireland.

Brits need to know where to find each other

5. Columba's

St. Columba's College in Rathfarnham is renowned for churning out dozens of hardcore, Queen-saluting little West-Brits every year, and this is not surprising, given the bizarre and outlandish practices that go on there. All children are forced to wear ridiculous capes during class time and a series of crazy, old style punishments are laid on to make sure that Columba's pupils don't turn out like other children. Kids who misbehave are made stand in front of something called the Warden's House in a white t-shirt and shorts three times over the course of the day for 45 minutes at a time, no matter what the weather.

6. Aravon School

Aravon is the ideal schooling place for the young West Brit. Pupils are encouraged to play classical instruments, be kind to those less fortunate than themselves and cheer discreetly for England in rugby matches. Past pupils include the children of popular singer/adulterer Chris De Burgh.

7. The Francis Bacon Studio at the Hugh Lane Gallery

The Francis Bacon studio in the Hugh Lane gallery consists of a dead, untidy Westbrit's opium den, which the state painstakingly transported brick by brick from London. Then, amid much fanfare and hype, the general public were invited in and shown a few scraps of paper with unintelligible crap written all over them.

Another Paddy Plot for Eastenders

God Bless the Eastenders scriptwriters. They've been good enough to include us Micks on their roster of ethnic minorities, with an Irish character all set to make his debut down in Albert Square. And the man who's been chosen to fill this glorious role is none other than Liam O'Maonlai's brother Colm.

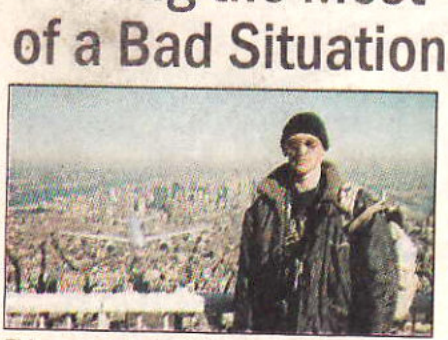
It would seem that Eastenders are trying to make amends for the well-thought out plotline they introduced a few years ago, which involved a few of the Brits coming over to Dublin for a holiday. The Celtic Tiger was presented in all its glory, with cows and sheep running around St. Stephen's Green and alcoholics riding horses up Grafton St. at full tilt. But now they have seen the error of their ways and are all set to bring in a character who represents the new Ireland.

Brookside and Coronation St. have also been partial to casting Irish people as rapists, drunks and wife-beaters over the last few years, but as yet there is no news of them looking to make amends.

Too much Moonlit Howling and Screwing

Howl at the Moon did wonders for its reputation as Ireland's most respectable nightclub last month. The Mount St. venue was taken to court by a little old lady who explained that customers had a habit of taking shits in her front garden and flashing nobs, tits and flabby arses at her as they left the premises. A horrified Mrs. Mary Laird went on to explain how people liked to have sex outside her flat while men stood around having pisses and "watching the procedure."

Making the Most of a Bad Situation



This man is behind the whole scheme

Are you short of cash? Follow these instructions and your problems will be gone in a jiffy. Just ring up a Twin Towers charity organisation and start crying when someone answers the phone. Then - in between sobs - tell them that your closest relative died on September 11. Before you know it, some of that money that all those celebrities raised will be winging its way into your bank account. Over 100 hundred people have already tried this clever ploy, and many of them have actually succeeded!

Get Ho

With a general election around the corner, politicians are busy whoring their arses and telling lies to as many different people as possible.

Not wanting to be left out of this propaganda-fest, The Slate asked all

Foreigners boozing all night

WHICH ONE OF OUR USELESS POLITICAL PARTIES HAS THE LEAST PATRONIZING APPROACH TO NIGHTCLUB CLOSING TIMES

the main parties some simple enough questions: why the fuck do Irish clubs have to close so early?; and what's your view on the issue? The rest of Europe can go clubbing all night if they feel like it, while we in Ireland are stuck back in the Ballrooms of Romance era.

One notable feature of our survey was that the commies have some alright ideas when it comes to clubbing. T left wing parties in ge al were far more coh in explaining their po about club closing tir

The two civil war pa ties, on the other han were remarkably unh ful. It would seem tha as long as Lillies and are open late enough them to pick up ming slappers - Fine Gael Fianna Fail couldn't g a fuck what happens rest of our clubs.

Labour

Aine Morris

"PEOPLE SHOULD have the right choose if they want to stay out longer," says Aine Morris. She says that Labour favours a more relaxed approach to alcohol consumption (especially champagne). "We think that cafes and places like that should be allowed to serve alcohol and there should be a lot more deregulation of the drink trade in general." As part of this softening up of alcohol laws, Labour want less restrictive nightclub, pub and off-license laws. "You should be able to buy alcohol when you want it."

Green Party

Cieron Cuffe

THE GREEN Party is in favour of abolishing all curfews on club opening hours. "It is a gross curtailment of individual rights not to allow people to choose when to go home," says their spokesman Cieron Cuffe. "The pre sent system whereby customers and st are turned out onto the street at similar times of night is not good for citizen pro tection and public order." And Cieron is also laying down the law for cuntish doo men: "Bouncers should be licensed and identifiable by large ID numbers - as in other parts of Europe."

Fine Gael

Simon Coveney

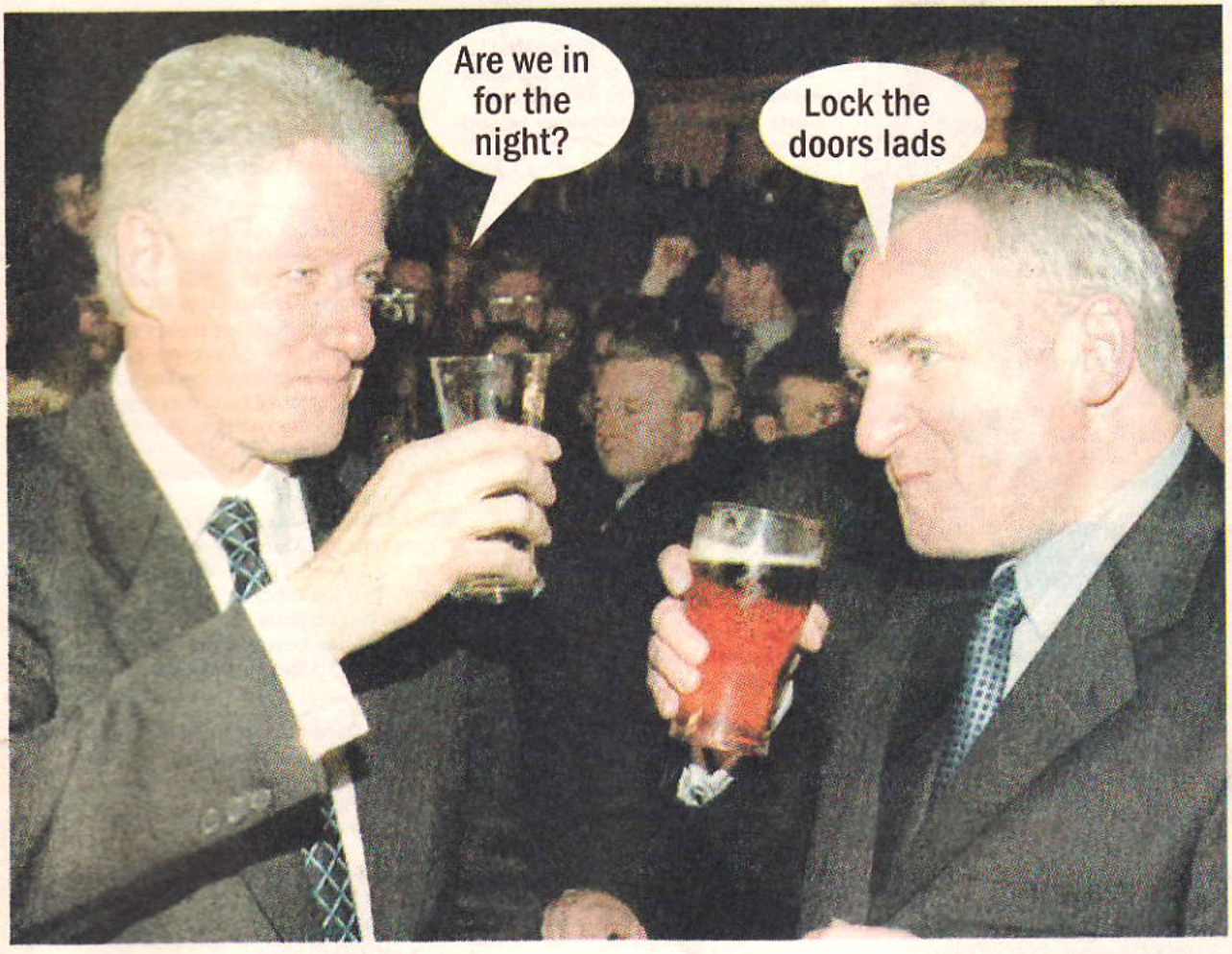
FINE GAEL TD Simon Coveney seemed to be as confused about this as his party are about fucking everything else at the moment. He muttered something about how late-night clubbing would lead to "the abuse of alcohol and ... anti social behaviour". Then he contradicted himself by talking about staggered closing times.

Progressive Democrats

Nobody at all

THE PDS press officer has obviously been on a week-long bender as he was unavailable for comment. We spoke to him a couple of weeks ago and he said he'd get back onto us. In spite of numerc messages that we left on his phone he didn't bother his arse giving us a ring to tell us what the story was.

me To Bed



Communist Party Eugene McCarten

THE REDS are in favour of clubs opening all night - as long as employees aren't being treated like slaves and residents aren't being vomitted on or assaulted as punters leave the venue. "If a club is going to be open all night then it should have a staggered system of licensing," says Eugene McCarten. "People go to find work in these places as a last resort. The pay isn't great and it's very difficult with long hours. If somewhere is going to be open all night then it should only open at 10 in the evening. Likewise if it is opens during the day then it should close at night."

Fianna Fail

A load of faceless party hacks

AS YOU might expect, the Soldiers of Destiny had absolutely nothing to say for themselves on this issue. Their response to our queries was "have a look at the last Intoxicating Liquor Act," i.e. fuck off we've got an election to win here, and this sort of carry on doesn't get Mrs O'Reilly's drive tarmacked.

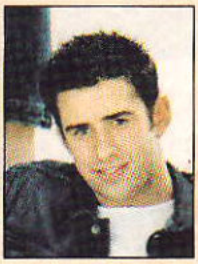
Socialist Party

Mathew Wayne

LIKE MOST of the smaller parties (except the PDs) the Socialists seemed to have an intelligent approach to the matter. "We've no problem with how late a nightclub opens until, but on a basis that it's with a balance of the community," said spokesman Matthew Wayne. "You could have zones or regions that are allowed have night clubs open all night."

Celebwatch

HAVE YOU BOUGHT STARS ON SUNDAY BUT STILL NEED MORE? READ ON!

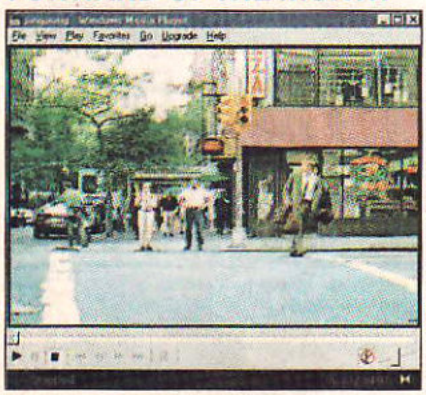


Lets hope he crashes it

LIAM FROM Six is under the impression that he's going to be a successful pop star. "As soon as I get my first big cheque, I'm going to buy a flash sports car," said the deformed-looking tool (right). "I think there's nothing wrong with living it up if you have the money. We all dream of being able to live like a pop star."

IT SEEMS that those appalling dogs in B*Witched are finally going to be given the heave-ho by their record label, who have discovered that the band are ugly, annoying, talentless and stupid. If anyone is feeling a sudden onslaught of nostalgia for the most-hated Irish musicians of all time, check out http://members.lycos.co.uk/bwitched/main.html. It's a very bitter site which calls itself 'The Only Good B*Witched Bitch Is A Dead One' and suggests that, if Edele wasn't in the band, she'd be either an abortion doctor or "the first female pedophile". Lindsay, apparently, is missing out on a great career as a "sex toy seller", and Keavy is a closet cross-burner who has joined the KKK.

FORWARD OF THE MONTH



Are you a sadistic fucker? Do you fancy seeing the chap above getting violently run over by two cars as he tries to cross the road? Well then we can help. Send an email to forwards@theslate.ie with 'ping pong' as the subject title and we'll send you this lovely mp3 of him getting killed.

SLIDE INTO SHITE: CONRAD GALLAGHER

IT'S BEEN A HUMILIATING DOWNFALL FOR THE PATRON SAINT OF SHITHEAD IRELAND, CONMAN GALLAGER

Mid-90s - Conrad bursts onto the Dublin social scene, buys a porsche, moves into a house in Killiney and starts appearing in ridiculous celebrity magazine spreads.

January 1998 - Hooray! He wins a Michelin star award for Peacock Alley. The Irish Times drools all over the Letterkenny chef's "mesmerising cooking" and gets highly excited about "the seemingly unstoppable Gallagher phenomenon". Conrad himself issues a press release which claims that he was once described as "the Tarantino of the kitchen." "Today, a Michelin star," it continues bombastically. "Tomorrow? Who knows what else this entrepreneur has up his sleeve?"

March 1999 - Conrad continues to dash up the Dublin social ladder, and is so popular that the Irish Times ask him to appear in an ad, talking about how much he likes the paper.

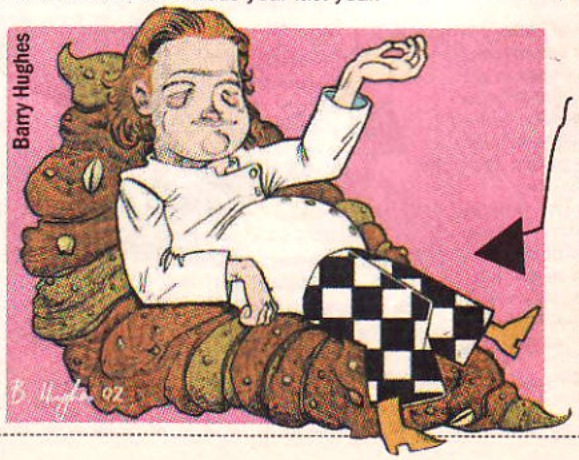
March to May 2000 - For some reason, things start turning to shite. In the space of three months, Conrad gets the chop from three of his restaurants - Mango Toast, Ocean, and Lloyds Brasserie. He describes the reported closure of Lloyds as "a complete fabrication", but staff are refused entry to the premises and the sign outside has been removed. Creditors are now only dealing with him on a Cash on Delivery basis.

July to November 2000 - A baying pack of creditors come looking for Conrad's blood. He is in and out of the courts like Liam Lawlor. With four restaurants constantly packed full of Celtic Tiger cunts, it's a mystery how Conrad wasn't able to pay his bills.

December 2000 Things reach a low when Gallagher is arrested for stealing paintings from the Fitzwilliam Hotel. He claims he thought they were his.

September 2001 - A lifeline! In spite of his Dublin troubles, Clever Conrad manages to impress a whole load of idiots in London, who then allow him to open yet another fancy restaurant - this time it's named after him, Conrad Gallagher!

January 2001 - Conrad is dragged into court again and ordered to pay over £160,000 to various former suppliers and landlords. "It's a new year," he says, optimistically. "I'm trying to keep my head above water. I had a disastrous year last year."



March 2002 - Conrad is kicked out of his London restaurant and co-owner Vince Power calls in the cops to investigate the Irishman for fraud. Weeks later, Peacock Alley is given the boot from the Fitzwilliam Hotel. The owners claim that Conrad owes them □80,000. The Star announces that Conrad "is now unemployed and could soon be homeless."

Rattling the Cages

IS HOT PRESS THE MOST BORING PUBLICATION SINCE THE PRINTING PRESS WAS INVENTED?

What is it? HotPress pitches itself as the bible of Irish music, but in actual fact it is the official mouthpiece of Irish capitalism.

Why is it in the news? It is celebrating 25 years of mediocre journalism and pandering to the whims of its advertisers.

Who started the magazine? Niall Stokes (right), a humourless, pedantic and moralistic old man who thinks that hanging around with Bono and eyeing up the Corrs means he's still down with the kids.

What is it famous for? Indulging in the kind of hypocrisy that would make Pope Leo X embarrassed.

Such as? Banging on about women's liberation while having pages and pages full of sex-line ads. Giving away free music compilations sponsored by the most hated and evil oil company in the world, Esso. Claiming they're 'rattling the cages of Irish society' while saying absolutely nothing critical about MCD's monopoly on the live music scene in Ireland. Running features about recording studios which mostly recommend companies who take out adverts with them . .

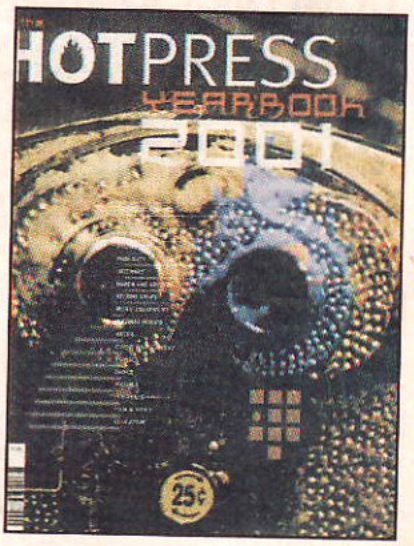
Was it ever good? Back in the 80s when the Catholic Church was just about to lose the final remnants of it's influence on Irish society, HotPress came along and claimed the entire credit for bringing about it's downfall. But it wasn't bad back in the early eighties - they championed the underdog and the local Irish music scene.

Does it not do that now? Any self respecting underdog would run out into the middle of a motorway and lie there before having anything to do with Hotpress.

They're now so cutting edge that they feature people like Westlife and Julia Roberts on their front cover.

Who write for them? Rock hacks like Olaf Tyrannsen who thinks his adventures on the way to an interview are more important than the subject. They also have the world's most miserable gay columnist in Bootboy. They also have a shit 'phantom' social column that name checks their own mates, plugs the launch of some new vodka and mentions east coast radio, Paul Brady and the latest shite Gerry Stembridge project in every other sentence.

What will become of it? It'll do alright for the next five years as they'll do anything to increase their advertising revenue, but their readership are so old now that within a decade they'll all be dead and the magazine will go down to toilet. Hooray!



Look at this shite

More Glorious Celeb shit

NOT ONE, BUT TWO CELEBRITY NEWS SECTIONS. THE SLATE MAG HAS IT ALL

RONAN KEATING is still desperate to crack America. His first single there only sold a humiliating 25,000 copies, but Ronan is going back for more punishment with the equally shit Life is a Rollercoaster. The sneaky bollox has also made some country and western music, in the hope that some rednecks who have never heard of him will buy his records by accident.

Samantha Mumba's movie debut has demonstrated that she has all the acting ability of a pregnant dog. Since its U.S. release last month, The Time Machine has done well at the box office, but Sexy Sam has come in for a hammering from yankee film critics. Her acting has been described as "wooden", and the New York Post said that the film is "almost worth watching to see just how bad acting, inadequate direction and most importantly, a criminally crass and unimaginative screenplay can make so little out of a proven idea."

Keating: low sales haha!

DO YOU WANT THE FOOD OF

CHECK OUT THIS GREAT GUIDE TO THE FINEST CUISINE IN DUBLIN. UNFORTUNATELY WE COULDN'T AFFORD TO GO TO ANY OF THESE PLACES SO WE HAD TO REVIEW THEIR WEBSITES INSTEAD.

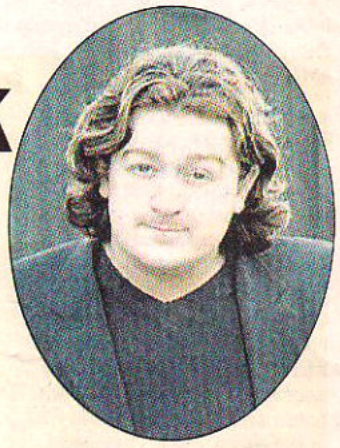
La Stampa

Guilt by association

THE MARKETING geniuses at La Stampa make a crude attempt to win our hearts by indulging in a vulgar display of name-dropping. "Pierce Brosnan, Puff Daddy and Anna Friel mix with the movers and makers of Irish society amid an atmosphere of fun and sophistication," claims their smug corporate website.

The place has been designed by the same people who did "Johnny Dep's [sic]" Man Ray restaurant in Paris, slavers another part of this promotional bullshit, like some oily stranger in a bar who claims to have slept with Julia Roberts' sister. The effect of all this is deeply uncool. Still you can't blame them for aiming at the lowest common denominator.&

Peacock Alley



Les Plats - C'est Moi

This is a bit of a collector's item, seeing as the main man, Conrad Gallagher, was given the boot as head chef last month (see page 6 for Conrad's Slide into Shite). While he was at the helm, though, Conrad was seemingly very eager to outline his personal philosophy and let everyone know how great he was.

"Food should be like Grand Opera, full of excitement and entertainment," he announced - and back then nobody had the good sense to guffaw in his face. Ireland's most desirable young poet/entrepreneur went on to pay fulsome tribute to himself in a four-page biographical presentation.

Writing in the third person, Conrad declared that "setting the pace seems to be Conrad Gallagher's philosophy," before waxing lyrical about "Conrad's inspirational cuisine"; "the top-class chef"; "this extraordinary talent"; etc.. Not a particularly modest cunt by the looks of things.

Readers were also offered the chance to take Conrad's five-day cooking course, in which you could grope at the hem of the master's garment, panting and sweating with awe, in return for just 900 ding-dings. Check out www. as quickly as you can to see if they've forgotten to take all this nonsense off their site yet.

A BLAST FROM THE PAST

The now-defunct **Le Coq Hardi** was a favoured haunt of Charlie Haughey, and its website is suitably vulgar and ridiculous. In the opening salvo, the author announces that his restaurant is "situated where it should be in the heartland of Dublin 4." A lot of guff follows about how businesspeople have to make sure that they impress each other, before the wise conclusion that "it's all simply a question of standards. In choosing the right restaurant, you set the standard." Bravo. Thank fuck it's closed down.

Someone else will pay

TO TRY KINGS?

Thank God It's Friday's

Like the restaurant itself, TGI Friday's website is a ridiculous corporate attempt to try and seem hip and edgy. It's certainly the only restaurant website we came across that includes a 'Legal Info' section. This is hilariously entitled "Legal schmegal stuff to keep our lawyers happy..." Also keeping it real is the 'Mixology' section, in which retro-chic dickheads from the 1950s tell you how to make various cocktails. 'Cool, but Responsible,' seems to be their motto, though, as you will find on the 'TGI Friday's Responsible Drinking Statement' page - a turgid lecture about underage boozing.

The fun continues with the TGI Friday's Personality Test, in which you are assigned one of four possible personality types (Martini, Beer, Margarita or Bloody Mary). This involves entering your personal details so the cunts can sell them on to marketing companies. Fucking Cool.

Responsible Drinking

Oliver St John Gogarty

Ollie himself standing outside the pub that bears his name

THE OLIVER St John Gogarty group lay on the plastic Paddywhackery pretty thick for the tourists. Their best-known pub is "named after Dublin's most famous pilot, politician & avid connoisseur of Guinness," announces the company site, in truly moronic fashion. "Oliver St John Gogarty spent many nights exuding his customary wit in this very haunt." A little down the page the blurb is again telling us that St John Gogarty was often to be found "exuding his customary wit and charm in this very haunt." Must be a little phrase they read.

Like everything about Oliver St John Gogarty's, the menu is 100% authentic Irish, featuring Dublin Bay Prawns, Seafood Molley Malone, Emigrants Corned Beef, Thraditiondle Dublin Coddle...arrah so Irish it makes Finn MacCumhaill look like Patrick Mayhew. The historical antecedents of the place run deep, as the menu proves. There's "Trinity College Chicken, whose origins go back to the 180's [sic] and Ester Dunne's Potato Cakes, origins date back to 1857." Gogarty's also own the £eft Bank, a "trendy restaurant and bar - with a difference [.] a banking theme." Anyone who is not an asshole will presumably be enraged by this bullshit, but they should draw comfort from the fact that whoever dreamt it up is probably bankrupt by now.

No. 27 The Green

No. 27 The Green explodes off the screen in a great trumpeting eruption of snootiness and bombast. "It is renowned for quality, and creativity of its food," if not for its grammatical correctness, and sells itself on its pre-war aristocratic elegance. "A setting of Edwardian splendour enhanced by the reputation of The Shelbourne Meridien itself," sniffs the website. "The philosophy of the restaurant is to provide food of the highest international standard, utilising-" (they don't just use things in the Shelbourne) "- superb quality Irish ingredients as a supporting theme." The menu features quail, 'squab', and - astonishingly - Roasted Suckling Pig. Needless to say all this West British magnificence appeals enormously to the fiftysomething no-neck Donnybrook gombeen men who by and large populate the Shelbourne.

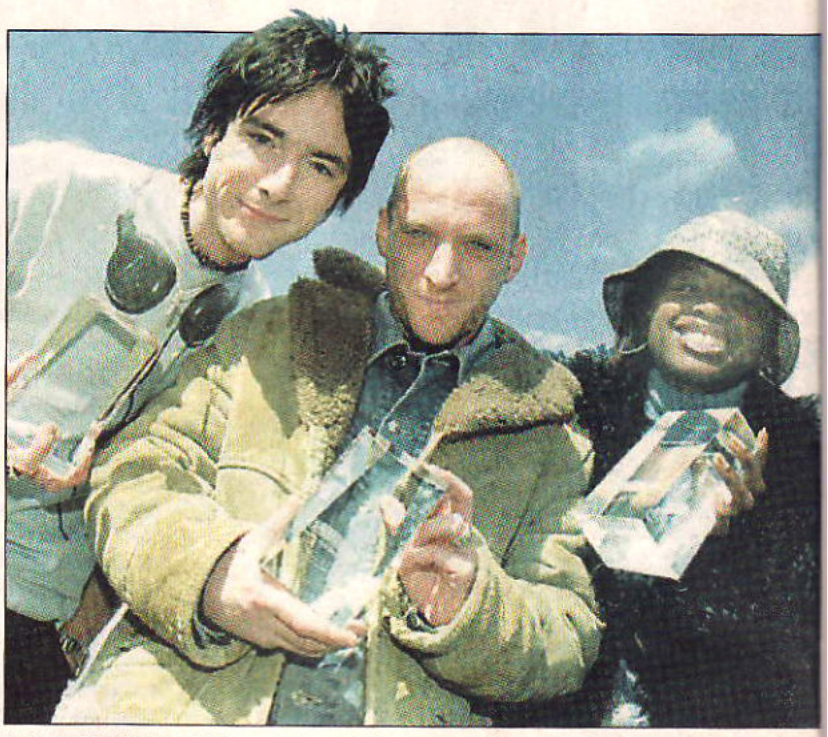
Roasted Suckling Shelbourne Regular

THE BANQUET HALL AT MALAHIDE CASTLE

IF YOU'RE looking for something a little out of the ordinary, why not try a medieval banquet in the Great Hall of Malahide Castle. The Castle was originally the seat of a powerful clan, as the website proudly reveals: "The Talbot family lived here from 1185 to 1973, when the last Lord Talbot died." The Talbot connection seems important: "The history of the Talbot family is recorded in the Great Hall, with portraits of generations of the family." Our appetite for Talbot-related titbits has dulled, but the site drones on: "One of the more poignant legends concerns the morning of the Battle of the Boyne in 1690, when fourteen members of the family breakfasted together in this room, never to return, as all were dead by nightfall." A tragedy, especially since none of them could possibly have made it to the Boyne valley in time to be slaughtered by King Billy later that day.

DUBLIN'S SQUEAKY CLEAN RAVE SCENE

CLUBBING FEATURE PART 3: DANCE CULTURE IS NOW AWASH WITH MONEY, AND THERE'S PLENTY OF LOOT THERE FOR ANYONE WHO CAN PRETEND THAT DRUGS HAVE LITTLE OR NOTHING TO DO WITH IT ALL



Johnny Moy hob-nobbing with two of the more underground MTV presenters

ABOUT A month and a half ago, The Sunday World took a break from sending their hacks out to review the latest strip bars and instead did an investigation into the evil of Dublin dance-clubs. The reporters skilfully overlooked the fact that most Irish journalists spend their lives getting violently drunk, snorting cocaine and lying about their marital status to fat, middle-aged women in Lillie's Bordello.

This chap knows how to run a club - into the ground

This momentary lapse of memory allowed them to make the "shocking" revelation that drugs are available in Dublin nightclubs. The Red Box, Switch, The Temple Theatre, Shooters and Frazers on O'Connell St. were identified as places where "buying pills is as E-asy as buying sweets in a shop".

Then - in another oversight - the Sunday World carried an article (in the same issue as their drugs expose) recommending that people head along to the Lisa Lashes gig in the Temple Theatre. "This event will be a sellout show," they say of Lisa's visit, "so get down early or purchase advance tickets from Ticketmaster." Now, without wanting to upset Lisa Lashes, listening to her music while not completely fucked on E is about as much fun as getting kicked in the head by football hooligans. Indeed, the World had 'revealed' as much in the earlier part of the paper, when they went down to the Temple and found the place to be "awash with drugs." A few weeks later, and Ireland's finest tabloid were to be found co-sponsoring the Smirnoff Dance Music Awards - again seemingly oblivious to the link between club culture and "evil drugs".

This is all quite strange. Surely Tony O'Reilly and his satanic newspaper empire are either: a) fighting to keep Ireland drug free; or else b) they are telling people to go out to Hard House nights and, by implication, take a healthy dose of pills. The reality is that, like other big businesses, the Sunday World have copped on to the fact that thousands of their potential customers take drugs and listen to dance music every week. And if they write about this music, they are more likely to sell newspapers to these young people.

Killer Tabs

However the Sunday World is also a hardcore moral-crusading paper which routinely sticks the knife into 'drug scum' and slaps the Gardai on the back for their latest haul of 'killer tabs'. In the name of being all things to a million readers, they are therefore destined to send out completely contradictory signals like this every now and then, but they probably don't give to much of a fuck about that.

The Sunday World aren't the first big business to have realised that there is plenty of money to be made out of dance music by people who know absolutely nothing about it. For a while in the 90s,

almost everyone who was involved in club culture was treated like a convicted paedophile. A generation of marketing assholes who had grown up in Leeson St. wine bars certainly didn't want to associate their product with a load of tops-off sweating maniacs who seemed to be dropping dead from E every week.

But then it slowly began to dawn that there was a huge untapped market at stake - most of whom were in an intensely gullible state of mind for the duration of their night out. One industry insider describes how Smirnoff got in on the act. "At first, drink sponsors wouldn't touch these dance events. But then they suddenly realised that they were alienating themselves from a large segment of their market. They were losing touch. A whole demographic area was leaving them and switching to Red Bull and water."

Mark from Marketing

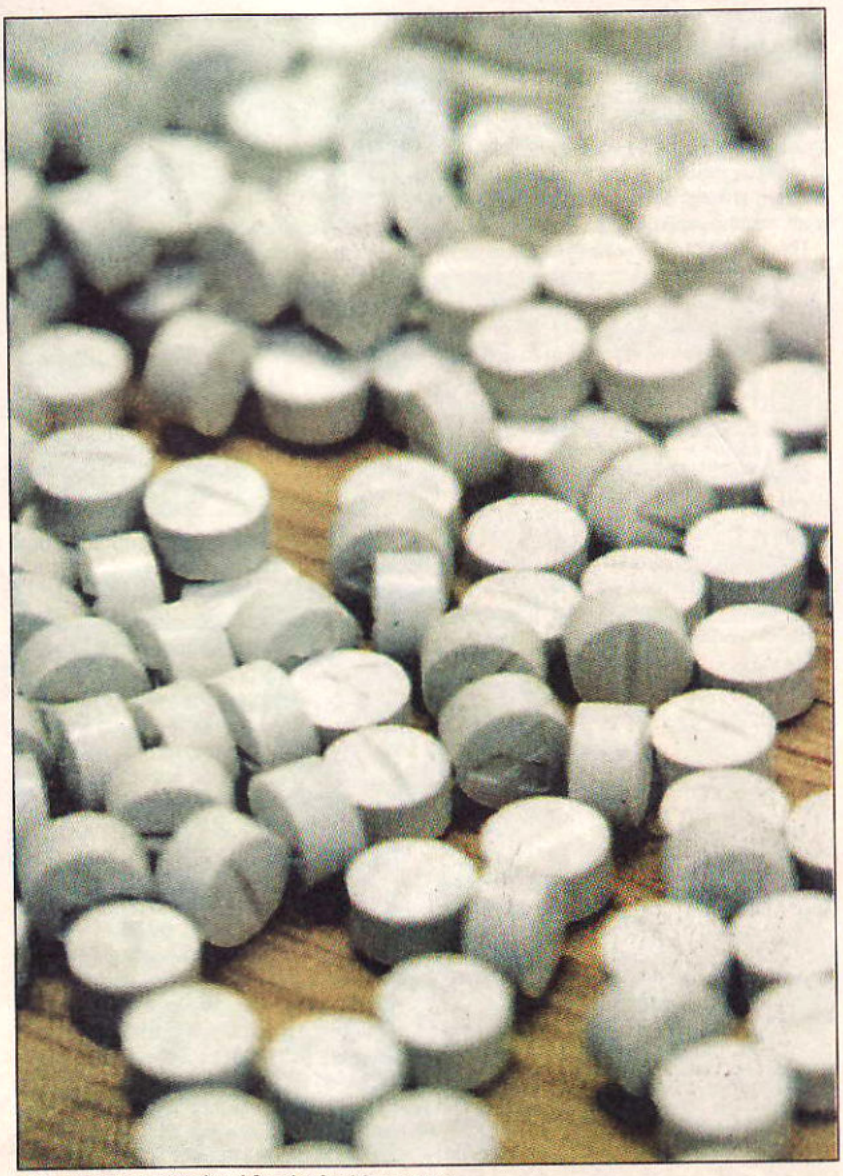
And so, clubbing became a very fertile ground for the spread of marketing spawn, and the ludicrous notion of an alcoholic beverage sponsoring a dance music event became quite normal. As soon as this happened, club owners and promoters realised that raving was becoming more acceptable and there were very few barriers to its popularity growing exponentially. If they stayed out of trouble and kept their licenses, they could pack their clubs with paying punters every weekend until kingdom come. Not only that, but keeping a clean whistle meant that large multi-national companies were willing to give them shedloads of cash for pretty much nothing in return.

One Garda noticed a change of attitude in Dublin clubs, with owners like POD supremo John Reynolds aware that cooperation was in their best interests. "I visited his club and I was always very, very, welcome. Anytime I was passing he would always come out and ask me if there was a problem and could he help." This more cordial relationship meant that the Gardai took a less confrontational approach, and smaller, more undercover style raids were used. This was a welcome break for club owners, who had been plagued by military-style attacks from the cops during the early 90s. These generally involved 150 Gardai storming the venue, all the customers getting jostled around roughly, and the whole thing ending up on the front of a newspaper the following day.

It was also in the Gardai's interest that people believed the clubs were being cleaned up. Having gangsters scrapping in the Asylum and dying people being thrown out the back of Sides didn't make it look like they were doing a particularly great job. So this new generation of club owners - Reynolds in the Pod, and U2 down in the Kitchen - were more to their tastes. Then, in 1998, the cops launched their much vaunted and publicised 'Operation Nightcap' campaign which was, and is, supposed to have cleaned up Dublin clubs and made them virtually 'drug-free' zones.

Operation Nightcap seems to have been based around six identical letters which were sent to a few city centre nightclubs and every newspaper in the country in 1998. The press played up the whole thing, claiming that this new tactic spelled the end for drugs in clubs. "Drug pushers lose sleep over Operation Nightcap," ran the Irish Times headline. Club insiders took a somewhat more cynical approach. "Of course, the clubs tidied it up a bit and fuck all happened after that." says one industry hack. "While there was a bit of a clampdown, the fact remains that it is impossible to stop drug dealing going on in clubs, and after a short while, it was back to business."

Despite Operation Nightcap, Dublin is still the easiest place to sell drugs in the country, according to another drug dealer. "If you're careful about it, you can walk into almost club in town and sell



The Garda's entire haul for the last ten years

Es," he continues. Are there any exceptions? "Yes". Where? Can the legacy of Operation Nightcap claim some credit somewhere? No. He names a well known, well publicised and profitable Dublin nightclub and says that "there are dealers in there who get protection from the bouncers. You always know never to go in there selling."

The implication is not that the clubs aren't doing their bit to stamp out drug dealing. Most of them would appear to be taking whatever measures they can. The Red Box reportedly had a bouncer standing on the balcony all night with an infra-red torch in his hand. If he saw someone dealing, he'd beam the light down on them, and a couple of bouncers would swoop in at dancefloor level to nab the dealer. But it seems that they are all pursuing a completely unattainable goal. There are at least as many pills being taken in Dublin every weekend now as there were in the crazy days of the Asylum and the Olympic Ballroom. To quote a Switch bouncer interviewed by the Sunday World: "Listen mate, we know that there is a shit load of drugs moving around down there, but we, the club, can't do anything about it".

The idea that Smirnoff, Lynx, Nescafe or any other club sponsors would openly admit to condoning this kind of drug use is an unlikely one. So some kind of cosmetic improvement is needed to keep the mums and dads at home believing that it's just like the ballrooms of romance in the old days, except the music's a bit faster.

Warehouse Parties

This is the kind of double-think that leads to the above-mentioned Smirnoff Awards being carefully choreographed to fit in with their ridiculous idea of 'underground' credibility - drug free of course.

POD boss John Reynolds

The boyas in blue busting some big time dealers

As stated in the press release, The Ambassador was decorated to get the 'vibe' of an illegal warehouse party, with "video screens projecting edgy club imagery" all around the venue. This could well go down as the worst warehouse party of all time: almost no-one on drugs; nothing to drink except piss-tasting Smirnoff products; and success-starved members of the Irish dance community all queuing up to suck the sponsor's cock.

And no doubt the Sunday World hacks were there on the night, guzzling Smirnoff Ice and congratulating each other on being so well-acquainted with youth culture. Meanwhile, the repercussions of their ridiculous article were being felt across the road in Frazers of O'Connell St.. This was the home of D:Fuse, an acid techno night that had been running since the early 90s - until it was named and shamed in the piece as some kind of drugs den.

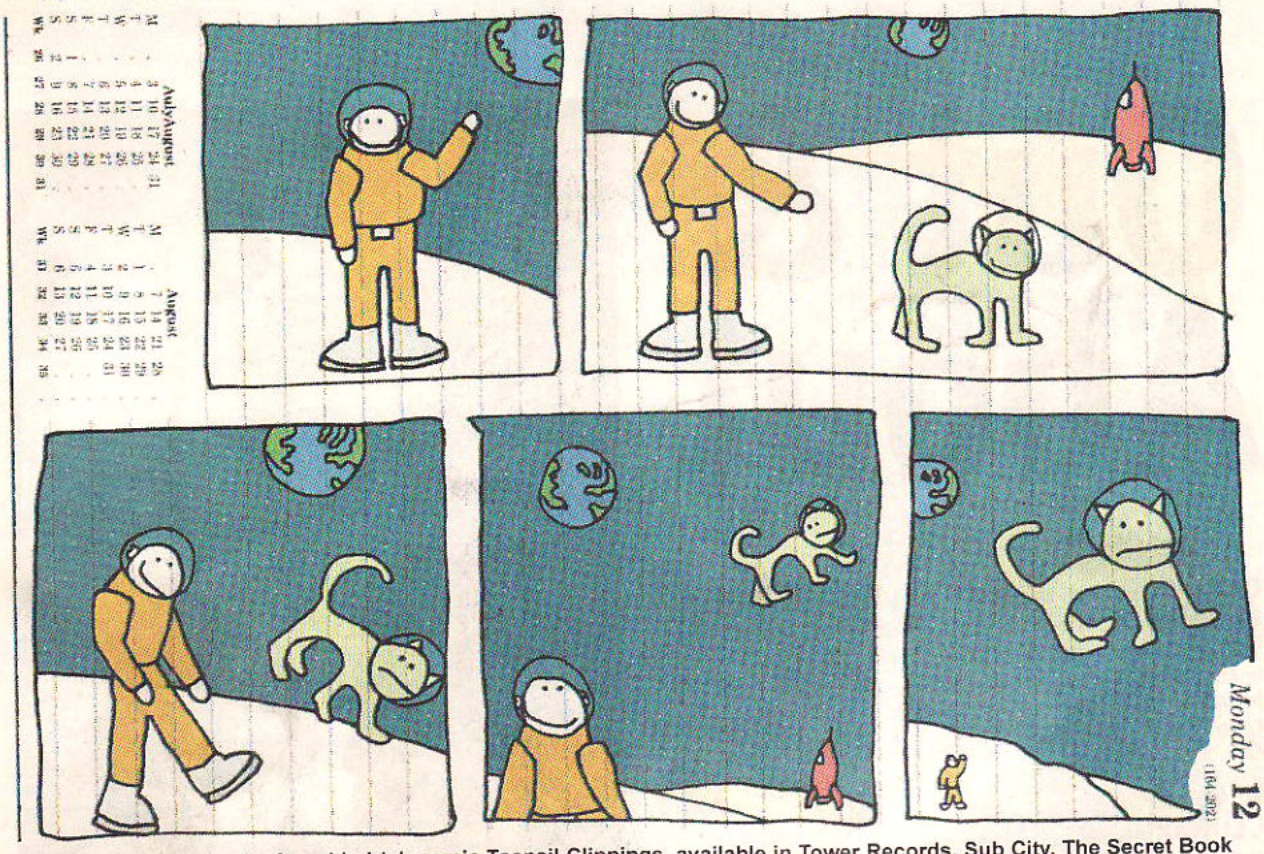
A dirty little kip of a spot, D:Fuse was almost certainly the most basic, raw dance club in Dublin. It was filled every Friday night with the kind of people who would have trouble getting into Bruxelles on a Monday afternoon, let alone being granted entry to a proper respectable nightclub.

It also made sweet fuck all money for anyone involved in it and clearly never played the game in the way that the bigger clubs did. After the Sunday World article, the Gardai popped in, and the owners at Frazers took the view that it wasn't worth their while hosting a club that was going to attract this kind of negative publicity.

As well as being a soft target, D:Fuse was also an anachronism on the landscape of modern Dublin clubbing. With no furry boots, silver bras or podium dancers, there wasn't much to distract the public gaze from the fact that a whole load of people were getting fucked and listening to ridiculously hard techno music. Increasingly, this kind of cosmetic effect seems to be crucial to a club's ability to survive.

kick the cat...

gavin beattie



Kick the Cat can also be found in Irish comic Toenail Clippings, available in Tower Records, Sub City, The Secret Book and Record Store and Forbidden Planet. Mail order from Big If Publications, 23 Dominick St. Lower, Dublin 1.

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Out & About

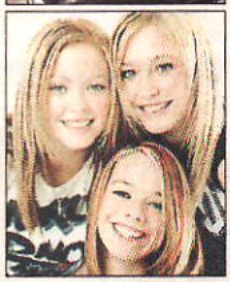
ONCE-OFF CLUBBING ... 22
With a new venue (the Tivoli) just open, it's yet another packed month for visiting DJs. The highlights include Grandmaster Flash (right), Mr. C, Carl Cox and DJ Rush

REGULAR CLUBBING ... 30
The up and down world of weekly clubs is captured perfectly in this delightful section of our listings

LIVE MUSIC ... 38
Those ho-s from Atomic Kitten (right) are joined this month by Sophie Ellis Bextor, the Handsome Family and Billy Bob Thornton

CINEMA ... 43
More good movies this month than usual - Royal Tenenbaums (right), Last Orders and Y Tu Mama Tambien. Don't worry, though. There's still a plenty of absolutely fucking appalling movies out there for April.

THEATRE ... 46
We got Friel wrong in our preview last month - it's actually shit.



TICKET COMPETITIONS

This month we've got mad giveaways for Vicar St. and the all-new Tivoli. So if you're into raving send an anagram of your name to clubbing@theslate.ie and tell us who you'd prefer see out of Dave Angel, Mr. C and DJ Falcon. If you're more inclined towards the guitar side of things, send a drawing of a saxophone to gigs@theslate.ie and say which of the following you'd most like to see: Maria Doyle Kennedy, Grant Lee Phillips, High Llamas, Loudon Wainwright, and Picturehouse

IF YOU WANT YOUR EVENT LISTED IN THE SLATE, RING 664 0007 OR EMAIL clubbing@theslate.ie, gigs@theslate.ie or arts@theslate.ie

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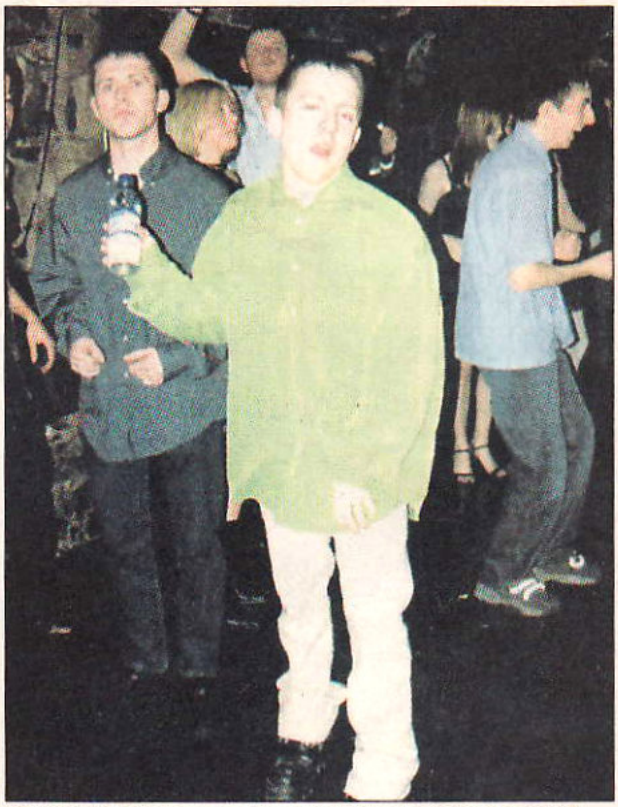
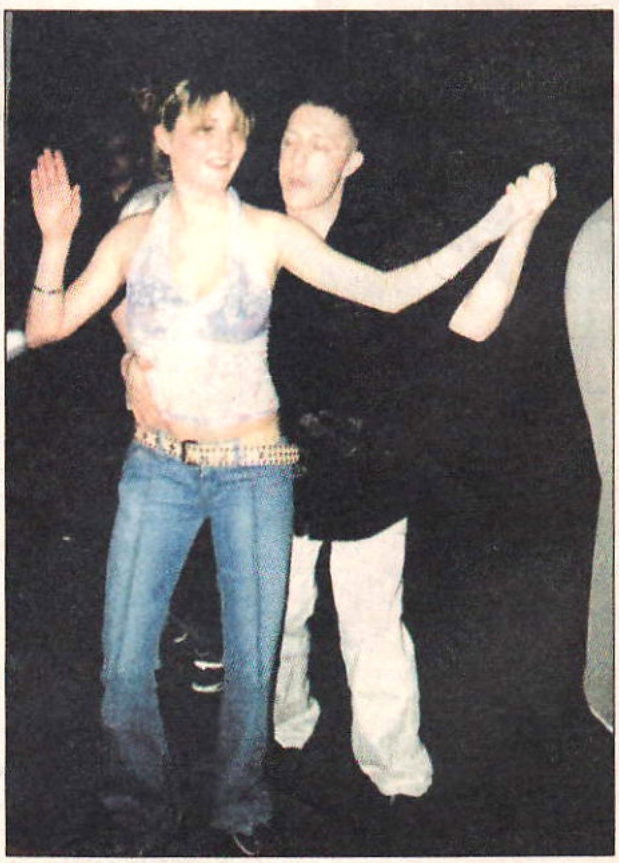


First the mullet came back and then the inbred look was all the rage



Glorious Dublin people

Once off clubbing

KENNY HAWKES
THURSDAY 04 APRIL
WAX €10

Hawkes took a powder last month and had to be re-scheduled to this date - a damaging blow to the Soul Patrol boyos, seeing as he will already have played in Mono by the time he gets to perform for them in Wax. This shouldn't be a major worry, though, as Dubliners can't seem to get enough of Kenny Hawkes, first introduced to the city in earnest by Anthony Mooney and co. during their previous incarnation as Neon in HQ last year. He's proved to be very popular, and rightly so, as both a DJ and producer exquisitely in tune with the Dublin deep house zeitgeist. If you want to whet your appetite for this gig, hunt down Hawkes' slinky Ashleys War Pt. 2 on Paper Recordings.

TREVOR ROCKCLIFFE
FRIDAY 05 APRIL
TBMC €15

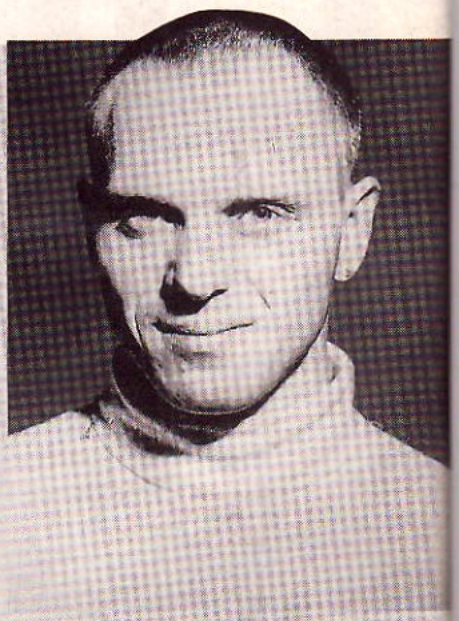
Along with those other great London also-rans Colin Favor and Trevor Fung, Rockcliffe lost his way to DJ superstardom somewhere round the mid 90s. Unlike them, he still seems to get a few gigs without having to promise to clean the tables afterwards, at least in Dublin. The main rationale for booking him again and again seems to be that he's cheaper than Carl Cox. The price tag is about the only difference between the two, though. They're both big, black, bald and - because they're best mates - play the same records. Expect savagely funky looped-up house on the very edge of techno. Support from Sean B Doyle.

PLUS ONE
FRIDAY 05 APRIL
MONO €10

Choice Cuts present Scratch Pervert Plus One as a fine follow up to the astonishing DJ Craze last month. This dude has the usual bewildering and wearying array of titles (is turntablism more complicated than boxing or is it just a lame b-boy attempt to associate with the great sport?) and is shockingly good. He'll be kicking it in front of a manic 30ft visual film collage, designed to blind the trainspotters and keep them away from the front. Support from Tu-Ki, Splyce, Mayhem and OB

IT'S THE EBENEEZER GEEZER

MR. C
REDSETTAZ, PHILTH
SATURDAY 06 APRIL
TIVOLI €16.90



MISTER C: Why is he shaming the Shamen?

LET'S CALL a spade a spade here. And a goon a goon. Mr C would like to have us believe that he is famous for his South London empire, The End (consisting of club, record label, management company and burger chain). And famous for his championing of ultra-obscure tech house and funky breaks via his Plink Plonk label. But in reality, he did not enter the public consciousness as tech-y housey plinky plonky Mr C. He entered the public consciousness through something he'd rather we forgot: The Shamen. As the irritating prick from The Shamen, to be exact. But we at The Slate are not going to forget The Shamen - not least for the fact that they were the second best dance band of the early nineties.

Resembling a psychedelic Brian Harvey, Mr C winked and waggled his fingers through a succession of fantastic pop-rave hits - L.S.I., Move Any Mountain, Phorever People and the tabloid-shocking, cockney-rapping Ebeneezer Goode. The latter was the most successful rave record of the era, holding the Number 1 spot for a month during vintage 1992. In spite of this, it has been left at the door by the bouncers at the current Old Skool extravaganza. The silence on Ebeneezer Goode is only periodically broken when some techno spa tries to score trainspotting brownie points at a party by dredging up the Richie Hawtin mix (incidentally, one of Hawtin's worst ever excursions onto vinyl). With any luck, a forthcoming remix retrospective, Hystericool, may redress history's curious shaming of The Shamen. But in any case, tonight's gig should be stomping - his last couple of visits here have been great affairs, with his current lean towards banging tech-house and funky techno sure to send punters wild.

OLD SKOOL 3
FRIDAY 05 APRIL
RED BOX €10

OK, we were wrong about the second one (it turned out to be just as good if not better than the first), but quietly confident that the bubble will burst this time round. The main draw tonight - Tonie Walsh - was never fully-installed in the Dublin mainstream back in the day. Smaller, fringe events like Elevator and gay stuff like Ham were more his thing. Liam Dollard may get to stretch his legs in a deeper direction than his support slot at Old Skool 1 allowed. Expect a housier content than the hardcore ballcrushers and knacker anthems of 1 and 2.

ANDREA PARKER
FRIDAY 05 APRIL
KITCHEN €15

Who said The Slate were sexist? Not a bit of it. We love nothing more than heading down the Kitchen to see two sweet babes getting their jellies out on the decks instead of a proper DJ - just don't let them near the equipment in case they fuck something up, right? Andrea Parker is known for her introverted doodlings on Mo' Wax. But don't be put off by that - her DJing runs the gamut of left-of-centre styles from drum n bass to electro to beats and hip hop. Support DJ Aoife Nic Canna, meanwhile, is Dublin's resident soul siren and her Saturday night backroom rnb party at Tomato is a new contender for the city's ultimate playas ball. Just don't ask her to get her baps out or a tattooed bicep will swing into action.

Do you want to write for this clubbing section? Just send an email in to clubbing@theslate.ie with 'clubbing mailout' as the subject and we'll start letting you know what needs to be done.

GIVE IT A LASH, FLASH

Listen Ma, I'm nearly 50. Leave me alone.

GRANDMASTER FLASH
SUNDAY 14 APRIL
RED BOX €15

GRANDMASTER FLASH, living legend, blah blah blah. The question is, is he going to entertain us to the max tonight or will we be content enough just to hand over our cash to get a glimpse of the man who invented scratching? Chances are, we'll settle for the legend angle - but as legends go, he's one of the greatest.
Flash first appeared on the musical horizon in 1974 when, as a teenage electronics student called Joseph Saddler, he started watching Kool Herc spin and cut records at Bronx block parties. The young Flash copped that one thing Herc lacked was precision and consistency and, serious lad that he was, he developed what he called the 'Quick Mix Theory'. This took Herc's idea of only playing the percussive sections of records, but doing it seamlessly by getting both records playing at the one tempo - like he'd seen the disco DJs do down in Manhattan. The problem was that the only mixers which allowed a DJ to hear the record before the audience (and so match the speed) were behind closed doors in the swishest Manhattan clubs. So he built his own.
Saddler spent the rest of the year developing his skills, and debuted in late 1974 at a Bronx park to total ridicule. Nobody understood what he was up to and they all went home, dissing him on the way. After a brief period of depression, he persevered, discovering the art of scratching on the way. "My Mother would bust in on me while I was practising," he recounts. "She would talk and I would have to listen but to keep my place on the record I moved it back and forth over the beat with my hand. I liked the sound..."
Two years of sweating it later, Grandmaster Flash, as he was now known, took the stage at the Audobon Theatre in Harlem (where Malcolm X was shot) with his crew The Furious Five, to the biggest and craziest reception the ghetto had ever seen. The rest - Flash On The Wheels Of Steel, The Message, White Lines - is history. Expect a trip down memory lane the way only a true veteran knows how to deliver it.

SEB FONTAINE
SATURDAY 06 APRIL
AMBASSADOR €24

Seb Fontaine has the big fat gombeen look of a lad who you'd be getting in to do a bit of grouting in your bathroom, or maybe put down some decking out the back. The sad truth, though, is that he's here to lash out his underwhelming brand of kiddy shite for a fee larger than the price of your entire gaff. He's probably not the worst of his type and, for what it's worth, Fontaine's CV is pretty impressive, being supposedly the only jock to hold residencies at both Cream and Ministry of Sound (not to mention the fact that his mum was an Ibiza DJ in the 70s). Still - bollocksy epic shite. Support from Eoghan Young

ANGEL MORAES
SATURDAY 06 APRIL
TBMC €20

Once Dublin clubbers get a load of Puerto Rican New Yorker Angel Moraes, we'll never see the back of him. A custom made DJ for a town fuelled on lush, deep drugged-up house, Moraes began his impeccable DJing career at the age of 13 during the roller disco boom of the late 70s. Since then, he's absorbed every chapter of New York club culture first hand, from JellyBean Benitez' Funhouse to the Paradise Garage at its height. Securing a residency in one of the city's most notorious sleazepits, The Sound Factory Bar (underneath Junior Vasquez' legendary Sound Factory) he cut the club's definitive anthem, Welcome To The Factory, in 1993. His new single, Turn It Up, should melt the Music Centre into submission tonight. Support from the Liberation DJs

SCOTT PROJECT
SATURDAY 06 APRIL
TEMPLE THEATRE €18

The brainpower required to come up with new ways of slagging this shite off every month is playing havoc with our sensitive constitutions. If the promoters at the Temple would give Mr. Project a fucking rest for even two months, we might have our batteries sufficiently recharged to come up with some neat new insults. As it is, we'll just have to make do...utter arse in the cheesy breakdown-y mould (literally, mould). He's a German producer signed to an Italian label and popular in America, which brings three great nations into disrepute.

DJ VADIM
SATURDAY 06 APRIL
SHELTER €14

Russian born DJ Vadim has found himself synonymous with the dreaded cross of trip-hop - which is proper order because that's exactly what he is. Hip-hop flavoured noodles will be the order of the day tonight - nothing jiggy enough to get your sorry white arse moving round the floor but nothing sufficiently experimental either. Caution should be exercised around anything with the words "jazz" or "fudge" in it and Ninja Tunes (who this chump records for) has both. We recommend sticking two Valium in your wallet before you leave the house in case it all gets too much. Support from Demolition Man

SISTER BLISS
SATURDAY 06 APRIL
RED BOX €15

This lady is singularly unpopular with all but bug-eyed leaving cert students and foreign backpackers who think Ministry Of Sound is the spiritual home of dance music. Bliss does absolutely nothing wrong except play accessible progressive and trance music to deeply uncool people. This unforgivable sin has seen her sentenced to two years playing the Red Box every second week and getting the arse slagged off her by every man jack in the Irish media. We blame those tits-under-me-coat flasher photos she did last year which have overshadowed every interview in which she claims to be an independent feminist. Still, she's not as unpopular as Faithless. Support from Robbie Butler

WE'VE SENT FOR TRENT

RON TRENT
BILLY SCURRY
THURSDAY 18 APRIL
WAX €10

Very trenty indeed

THIS IS the gig that will make or break Soul Patrol - Wax's Thursday night club. If, like Kenny Hawkes last month, Trent cancels, people may well lose their faith. If he shows up, and does what he is well-capable of, Soul Patrol has the potential to be one of the best new nights of the year.

The Chicago DJ and producer has never been tempted to play on these shores before - unfortunate considering his omnipresence in the upper stratosphere of house. DJing since as far back as 1982, Trent grew symbiotically with house itself, absorbing the music and culture as a teenager. This was during house's brief period as a major part of the Chicago's black identity (the basketball court and block party hip-hop battles of New York were replicated in Chicago but with house as the soundtrack).

By 1987 he was already in the local studios cutting prodigious jack tracks to put his elders to shame, before hitting paydirt in 1990 with Altered States. Although it sounds lumbering and basic now, Altered States is on a par with Joey Beltram's Energy Flash in that it pointed the way forward for the next ten years. When Slam streamlined its revolving hook to create Positive Education three years later, the track's classic status was assured.

Since then, Trent has explored the deep house landscape with impossibly stylish results - look no further than he and Chez Damier's Prescription Records catalogue. As a DJ, his residency at NYC's Giant Step keeps his dancefloor instincts razor-sharp. Trent has had slightly less success with his afro-centric Batidos and Urban Sound Gallery projects, but tonight will most likely see him in gentle house mode. It should really be a cracker of a gig.

TONY C
SATURDAY 06 APRIL
SWITCH €13

Tony Cregan hails from the middle of Derry, for which he has our deepest sympathies. Quite aside from all the hurley action and boarded up shops, Derry's only claim on the dance music world so far has been that flash gyrating cunt in the tartan suit (aka D:Ream). Things can, indeed, only get better for Tony C - and they did, last year when the house merchant visited the Winter Music Conference in Miami. With everyone furiously exchanging records and kissing arses, Tony decided he had to get in on this production game. He got himself into the studio, and Push Yourself (Right Up) is the happy result. Caned by Steve Lawler and (we're not sure if he should be shouting about this) Seb Fontaine, it's not out officially until the end of March so tonight will be a good opportunity to hear it. Support from Dean Sherry and Barry Dempsey

CASH MONEY
SUNDAY 07 APRIL
RED BOX €TBC

Turntable god Cash Money finally visits Ireland, about five years too late. Half a decade ago, Cash made an incendiary series of comeback gigs at London's Scratch clubnight, and Dubliners were gagging for a chance to catch the former DMC champ getting busy. But then, shortly afterwards, a massive boom in turntablism brought the real whizzkids into the limelight. The likes of Craze, Noize and Babu have taken Cash's rudimentary transformer to insane levels of creativity, and he recently admitted to a hip hop magazine that the things those boys were doing left him in the dust. Still though, he's good at keeping a dancefloor primed and some of his turntable routines are fairly awe-inspiring. Watch out especially for the head-spinning two copy routine with Trouble Funk's Pump Me Up and his famous 'guitar solo' using the 33/45 switch on Run DMC's King Of Rock. And don't believe the hype. He didn't invent the transformer scratch - DJ Spinbad did. Support from Mayhem, Time and Fada

KERRI CHANDLER
THURSDAY 11 APRIL
WAX €10

Kerri Chandler has been mixing since he was nine years old, under the influence of his oul fella, an amateur New York disco DJ in the 70s. By the time he was fifteen, young girly name was churning out gospelly grooves for quintessential New York labels like King Street, Nervous and Strictly Rhythm. Unfortunately, he pretty much peaked in the early 90s, where his Strictly and Nervous labelmates like Erick Morillo and Armand Van Helden were just getting warmed up. Can't fault his evangelical DJ sets, though. Jesus is a big influence, but thankfully, so is booze - on a lethal combination of both, watch him bring the house down. Support from Padraig Disconaut

PAUL GLAZBY
FRIDAY 12 APRIL
TEMPLE THEATRE €13/10

This guy is a rising star in the hard house world. He started off as part of the Sheffield underground scene, and has gone on to play all around the UK, as well as some International dates. He runs his own Vicious Circle record label, and his productions confirm that he's got enough of the hardcore sixth sense to effortlessly work the hard house massive into a frothing frenzy. Apparently he's not keen on people getting too fucked at his gigs, which, considering he's a hard house DJ, means he's in the wrong game. Luckily his problem is more with the "too" than the "fucked", so if you know your limits he won't mind.

JIM MASTERS
FRIDAY 12 APRIL
TBMC €14.50

This cunt has been getting away with murder for years. Inexplicably befriended by both Carl Cox (with whom he started the Ultimate B.A.S.E. label) and Ministry Of Sound (in which he ran a long-term techno residency), Mr Masters dishes out nothing but hard-driven, metallic bang-it-out techno. So you'd be forgiven for thinking you were at least in for an energetic ride, right? Wrong. Somehow, he manages to throw this stuff down with such a degree of miscalculation and vibe-free monotony, that he'll rob the legs from under you quicker than a gobful of Rohypnol. Why they've bothered bringing him back is a mystery...Support from Rosman, Joe McGrath

DAVE SEAMAN
FRIDAY 12 APRIL
AMBASSADOR €18.50

This ex-Mixmag editor and terminal bore from Brothers In Rhythm has been shouting in his latest press release about how he's the 17th best DJ in the world. Not exactly the most exciting thing anyone has ever said about themselves, is it? Another one of Seaman's strange claims to fame is his spanking new American Express Black Card - apparently only dished out to the top 3000 earners in the UK. Who gives a fuck Dave? To Seaman, "progressive house is more of a spirit really than a sound". This may go some way to explaining why Dave has been churning out the same monotonous drone across the globe for far too many years now - he hasn't actually been listening to it. The cunt was only over a few weeks ago anyway, so if you didn't learn your lesson then, there's no hope for you.

DJ FALCON
SATURDAY 13 APRIL
TIVOLI €16.90

French House can't help but make the most miserable of men grin like fools and dance like girls. DJ Falcon is directly descended from the froggie trinity of Thomas Bangalter, Etienne de Crecy and Cassius, with his My Name Is DJ Falcon confirming he can filter it with the best of them. This will definitely be the sort of night where you won't need drugs to dance and smirk all night. Be warned, there will be shivers down the spine all round and lay-dees singing about things feeling good - but who gives a flying shite? Just keep your fingers crossed that support man Johnny Moy doesn't fuck it all up for everyone.

SANDY RIVERA
SATURDAY 13 APRIL
MONO €15

As Kings Of Tomorrow, Sandy Rivera is personally responsible for 2001's premier anthem for dull fucks everywhere, Finally. A ploddy sub-Masters At Work nightmare featuring one of those cringeworthy chest-beating 'soulful' vocals, this yoke had tight tee-shirted dickheads and dollybirds jutting smugly from side to side, giving it socks. Worse, we've had to put up with it for two years and running because that's how old it is (coming as it did from their 2000 album It's In The Lifestyle). Expect plenty more in this vein tonight and of course, expect the roof to blow off when he finally drops it. We recommend a swift bazooka attack once all the fuckers are inside. Support from Conor G

MARK BROOM
SATURDAY 13 APRIL
TBMC €15

Despite D1's nurturing of local talent (as witnessed on their recent clubbing.com CD), some of the best recordings to come from the label have been co-productions or solo work by Londoner Mark Broom. Not a surprise, really, considering that Broom's CV also includes collaborations with The Black Dog, Plaid, Eon and former acid house pioneer Peter 'Baby' Ford (with whom he co-runs the Ifach label). Given who he's worked with, it's probably also no great revelation that Broom's productions and DJ material are abstract, minimal and angular. Still recommended over many (and there are many) of this month's techno gigs for his ability to balance banging with beauty and funk. Support from the D1 DJs

TOM STEPHAN
SATURDAY 13 APRIL
RED BOX €15

Rapidly replacing Steve Lawler as the prog dullards' God of choice. There's nothing wrong with Tom Stephan. It's just that unimaginative promoters are likely to be ramming him right up our holes over the next twelve months. He was only here in February for fucks sake, and already some independent promoters seem to be mumbling about bringing him over for the May bank holiday weekend. For the record, Tom

TREVOR ROCKLIFFE: Cheaper than Carl Cox (see p.22)

- under his Superchumbo alias - makes excellent funky progressive and plays it well too. But if you miss him this time, don't worry - he'll be back. Support from Robbie Butler

YVES DERUYTER
SATURDAY 13 APRIL
TEMPLE THEATRE €18

Snatching the No Name Motherfucker Award for April it's....Yves Deruyter. He's a Belgian DJ and producer. He's played at Gatecrasher, I Love Techno and Mayday, and his tracks have shown up on mix CDs by Carl Cox and Danny Tenaglia. And he's modest, too. Check out this blushing exchange: "What was your worst gig?" "I don't think there were any real bad ones, hhhmmmm, hehehe, maybe it was because of me." Yeah, hehe-fucking-he. What's your name again, cunt? As far as the Temple rave bulldogs are concerned, it might as well be Joe Duffy up there, stuffed into a pair of Evisu jeans.

SPENCER FREELAND
FRIDAY 19 APRIL
TEMPLE THEATRE €13/10

Spencer joins the distinguished collection of hard house sadist bastards who've been invited to play down in The Crypt on Fridays. He's one of the residents at Frantic and records with Paul Reynolds (no, not the culchie reporter) under the name Hot Potato. Their track V/A represent the more serious, trancier side of hard house, and that's what he specialises in DJ-wise. So you can expect less of the old Chip and Dale helium voices and silly hoovers - more like Ferry Corsten on steroids in a bad mood. Frantic is your typical UK hard house hellhole and one of the best of them too. You hardly need us to tell you what to expect.

Send something in to clubbing@theslate.ie

JAMES RUSKIN
FRIDAY 19 APRIL
TBMC €15

Ferocity and monotony may make strange bedpals but Ruskin here marries them just fine...so prepare for the strange sensation of nodding off to sleep as your intestines get liquefied by loud overdriven kickdrums. It's more nu-Brit techno, along the same lines as Surgeon, Regis and Female - all hostile, thrashing loops and macho racket-making. Dublin punters seem to have limitless appetite for this kind of carry-on. Exhilarating, yes, for the first twenty minutes. An hour later and you may well be mentally investigating the possibility that James Ruskin's third turntable could be accommodated somewhere in the upper regions of his arse - now there's proper three deck action. Support from Kubaiashai

MARCO CAROLA
FRIDAY 19 APRIL
MONO €15

Motion gigs have been hit and miss over the last six months, but the guests have been chosen with an admirable touch of eclecticism (unlike some we know). Marco Carola made was here last autumn, but that shouldn't lessen the impact of his return to Mono for the first of Motion's two birthday specials. His thunderous performance that time was far more hit than miss and made a big impression on the Motion crowd. Marco is another one of these mad bastards from Italy not content with strutting around a pose joint in a beat-on shirt to impossibly shit piano house like Italians are supposed to. Instead he joined la cosa nostra of hard-as-all-fuck Italo-techno and trance which includes the BXR and Red Zone stable. Marco specialises in the kind of cavernous looped body grooves and vicious electro which makes Dave Clarke look like Mark McCabe - well recommended. Support from Warren K & Gavin Jones

FERGIE
SATURDAY 20 APRIL
RED BOX €20.90

The kind of Hard House Fergie plays tends to have about as much soul as one of James Browns' sexual harassment trials. Maybe it's because the gold-chained arsehole grew up in the North and has been imbued with an unhealthy penchant for the kind of beats that are normally found at a military training drill. In fact one of the worst things about the peace process is that it eliminates the possibility of young Fergus getting a pipe bomb up his hole. This gig will be full of hormonally-challenged 18 year olds whose idea of a perfect boyfriend is that shithead from Kildare who won Big Brother last year. Perhaps they won't be disappointed, but rest assured this grinning prick is as annoying as Alex (fergie) and about as underground as Sarah (fergie). Bring your hurleys and give this smug fuck a taste of home. Support from Robbie Butler

JFK
SATURDAY 20 APRIL
TEMPLE THEATRE €18

Back for another visit to the Temple Theatre is none other than JFK. Resident and promoter of the highly successful night Passion (in Leicester or some similar shithole), JFK aka Jason Kinch has been DJing for fucking ages. Unsurprising then, that if you're looking for a night of cutting-edge music this is not the place to find it. Not that cutting edge is a phrase regularly applied to the Temple's Saturday night parade of Italian hellraisers and British 'avin' it merchants. So if you want to pay good money to see a DJ on autopilot bang out this year's Magaluf favourites three months early then be our guest. You deserve each other.

BILLY NASTY
SATURDAY 20 APRIL
TIVOLI €15

Billy Frequent, more like. This chap practically has a monthly residency in Dublin these days and has been coming over to do gigs with the Influx crew right back as far as their days in the Beat Club and the Temple of Sound. So it's hardly surprising to see him lined up for a night of no-nonsense techno in this, Tivoli's debut month, given that Influx's Paul Davis is one of the three main players at the new venue. There has even been idle chat of Billy boy starting up an official residency there. Ignition Technician - the featured live act before the panel beating - are typical Tortured Records fare (good heavy techno and electro) and this gig should please the faithful.

A NASTY NIGHT AHEAD

DJ RUSH
ALAN SIMMS
FRIDAY 26 APRIL
AMBASSADOR €21

A CURIOUS one. DJ Rush is what happens when you combine the brutally funky hard-jacking Chicago sound with the bollocking stomp of Berlin techno. A Windy City native, Rush made punishing minimal jack-house with the best of them in the late 80s, recording for Chicago labels like Trax, Dancemania and DJ International. As the divide between jack trax and soulful songs became deeper by 1990, he was ready to mutate the original blueprint with the first wave of techno coming out of Europe. His sense of the hard-edged experimental guided him to deepest Berlin, where fellow ex-pat Jeff Mills took him in on his label Tresor and he started to develop a hybrid of European aggressive hauteur and Chicago wiggle. Back in his home town, the Relief and Cajual labels (led by original jack track-meister Cajmere) would pursue a similar route but never quite pushed the envelope like Rush. Beats and house DJ Jon Carter describes the Rush sound as "just about as far out there as dance music can get without being completely fucked up." It's extraordinarily physical and raw body music, usually coming complete with delightful titles like Do You Want Bass, Muthafucka? And if that makes you wonder if you are in fact, trapped at an under 18s rave in Aberdeen, have no fear - it's a deeply adult, sinister, sexual business. Too nasty to be house, too funky to be techno, Rush is an anomaly well worth checking out.

Where's my motherfucking Financial Times?

GHETTO FABULOUS

DAVE ANGEL
SATURDAY 27 APRIL
TIVOLI €18

ANGEL HAS never been less than upfront about his murky past. Growing up in South London, he kept himself in sharp outfits through pick-pocketing and later small time weed dealing, which eventually got him banged up for a few years in the late 80s. This spell in the nick - which saw him miss his son's early years and during which his jazz musician father died of cancer - convinced him to go on the straight and narrow and give music a shot.
Though his background was as tough as any So Solid extra, his music tastes were never grounded in the urban London soundtracks of hip hop, reggae, soul or the hardcore continuum. Dave's twin loves were jazz and Detroit techno. He famously remixed the Eurythmics' Sweet Dreams in 1990, and this gave him a minor chart hit from which he could financially launch himself. Then, throughout the 90s, he proved consistently himself to be a master of the jazz-techno genre he helped to invent. The ghetto caught up with him in 1998 when his South London flat and studio were cleaned out, prompting him to clear off to the leafy suburbs.
Angel's dancefloor instincts, forged during the acid house era, will allow him to keep a steady hand on what could in theory become a horrible Detroit-y noodlefest. Beware though, he tends to hammer it out without the delicacy associated with his records. And, whatever about his shady dealings, just try getting him to talk about the fact that his sister is Monie Love, the spectacularly rubbish rapper turned rnb drone. Support from Airtor Ronda

Monie Love's brother. Ha Ha.

ADAM BEYER
FRIDAY 26 APRIL
MONO €15

This is one that will have the techno slapheads in pre-orgasmic plateau mode from the minute they see the poster to the moment the Swedish don takes the stage. Of the most recent wave of uncompromising 'nu-techno' artists and DJs which include Ben Sims, Surgeon and Justin Berkovi, Adam Beyer's reputation is possibly the most gold-capped. His Drum Code label has released 22 much sought after techno essentials since 1997. Tying in nicely with the previous weeks Motion birthday guest Marco Carola (they run a record label, Zenit, together), his hard-hitting experimental techno should see the birthday celebrated in uproarious style. Support from Warren K and Sunil Sharpe

CARL COX
FRIDAY 26 APRIL
RED BOX €27.50

Support DJ Johnny Moy has been the subject of mucho sniping around town recently due to his superstar DJ antics (he left the TBMC to a chorus of boo-ing and heckling after supporting Jon Carter last month). It remains to be seen whether he's "got his act together" sufficiently to stand proud next to the monolithic Cox (below). As - consistently - the worlds most famous and best-loved DJ, criticising Carl Cox can sometimes seem a bit pointless. His detractors claim he's playing far too many worldwide gigs to possibly be able to put his heart into a bog-standard way station like the Red Box. Yet it's his famous willingness to play for two men in a toilet that will most likely see him generate the usual euphoria with his brand of funky techno and house. Support from Robbie Butler

SURGEON
SATURDAY 27 APRIL
TBMC €16

The story goes that Anthony Childs' introduction to production work happened when ex-Napalm Death drummer and current Scornman Mick Harris locked him into a studio and told him to "go mad".

Whatever the truth of that little anecdote, Childs' spitting-nails techno output as Surgeon has been both deadly on the dancefloor and aggressively experimental, (it also has as much in common with krautrock as with Jeff Mills). Unfortunately, he's also somewhat responsible for the sterile and loop-driven 'Black Country Sound' practiced by other Birmingham-based producers like Regis and Female. And while his own tunes are top notch, his DJing can sometimes lack the fireworks of an Andy Weatherall or Jeff Mills in full flight.

FUTURESHOCK
SATURDAY 27 APRIL
RED BOX €16.90

Fortunately this isn't a reunion of dreadful jazz-fusion combo Futureshock, but the reality isn't much better. Formerly known as Urban Hero, this prolific remixing, producing and occasional DJing duo brings their own brand of house to the Red Box with a dex 'n' FX performance. They've remixed all sorts from obscure nobodies to names like Moby and Underworld, but don't be caught out by that. Apart from one stand out track, Sparc, expect the usual plodding, anonymous progressive and deep house you can find all over Dublin these days. Pete Tong has regularly featured Futureshock in his Essential Selection, which should tell you all you need to know. Support from Robbie Butler

KENNY CARPENTER
SATURDAY 27 APRIL
MONO €15

No truth to the rumour that this is Karen and Richard's long lost younger brother coming along to give the up-for-it mob at Mono some featherlite easy listening schmaltz to gurn to. Kenny was the Studio 54 resident in the early 80s long after Nicky Siano had left and when even the most desperately untrendy pricks in New York wouldn't touch it with a pair of red braces. In a strange way, this gave him the means to develop his own style - closely based on Larry Levan's Paradise Garage up the road - but he's forsaken all of that during the house era and beyond to just trot out the usual Ministry Of Sound chunky soulful house. Good quality stuff though. Support from Raymond Franklin

Regular Clubs

MONDAYS

EAMONN DORAN'S
C.R.A.P €1

Resident DJ Dirk Montage knocks out rnb to indie, catering for the wandering alcoholics who roam the streets on a Monday night. Last review: January 2002

MONO
BABY €TBC

Newly resurrected gay night that makes an effort. Numbers were never spectacular, but worth checking out nonetheless.

PEG'S
BOOZE BONANZA €10

Amazing alcohol giveaway in this uninviting shithole, with all drinks going for a shocking £1 each. Bar shuts at 1.30.

RIRA
STRICTLY HANDBAG €7

This 80s Monday night drinking club continues with no signs of slowing down. Aidan Kelly and friends supply a good selection of accessible music, with the crowds getting well into it. Well recommended. Cool football table if you get bored too. Last review: October 2001

SWITCH
SLAM €7

Underground gay night that has a decent following without the scene-queens coming in and ruining everything. Good house from DJ Karen all night. Last review: February 2001.

WRITERS WANTED:
If you would like to help with The Slate's clubbing section, email: clubbing@theslate.ie or phone 664 0007

EAT THE BEAT@the Shelter
(fortnightly)

Sat April 6th:

DJ VADIM
w/ Demolition Man + guests

Sat April 20th:

NEW FLESH (Big Dada)
Live
+ Arvenne
doors 11pm

BIG DADA RECORDINGS

TUESDAYS

EAMONN DORANS
SHARPSHOOTER €6.50

Good queer indie night with an up-for-it, unpretentious crowd. This place is a terrible hole, and when empty seems more desolate than the Sahara, but this is one of it's better nights. Last reviewed February 2001.

KITCHEN
HEAVY METAL? €6.50

As Genius has upped and left to Tivoli, there is talk of a heavy metal night being run here. More info next month.

PEG'S
LOLLYPOP €8

Gay night with DJ Ross K. £2 a pint. Manager still won't return our calls, so you'll probably get a review from us in the year 2020.

RIRA
BUMP 'N' HUSTLE €7/6

Tuesdays keep the standard as it always is in Rira - high, if you like rnb, soul and funk. Fionn Davenport is the main resident and he's a good DJ. The football table is working again, so that's another good reason to go here if you can't think of anywhere else. Last reviewed July 2001.

SWITCH
DAMAGE €7/

Techno stalwart Joe McGrath bangs it out with a selection of top class Irish guests, including Rosman, Phil Wong, Sunil Sharpe and Giles Armstrong. Great stuff. Last review February 2001

TBMC
SALSA VILLA €8.5

Dr Rhumba's valiant but ultimately ill-fated quest to teach clumsy Irish people how to Salsa continues. You get free into the club after the lesson, but often the numbers are shit. Last review September 2001.

TIVOLI
GENIUS €8

This excellent techno night withstood the test of time in the Kitchen, drawing good crowds and being one the most consistent clubs in town. It'll be interesting to see how it fairs in this new venue. Residents include Richie Rock, Gordon Maher, Warren Kiernan and others.

WAX
TRIGGER €

House, soul, funk and beats from Anthony Mooney and Pat McMellow. The advantage of this swanky little place is that it doesn't suffer too badly if numbers are low. Last review October 2001.

It's always embarrassing when a blow-up friend deflates in mid-conversation

W'NESDAYS

EAMON DORAN'S
SNAKE EYES

Militant old skool trance and techno played to a sparse, confused crowd. Needs a kick up the hole, not recommended.

MONO
BLISS €8

Mono has been revamped and they continue to get the students in on this cheesey but successful night. Watch out, though, the Mono bouncers have been getting a very bad name of late for being unreasonable cunts at the door. Last review Jan 2002.

PARNELL MOONEY
FIREHOUSE SKANK

Heavy dub, reggae and ska is what is on offer here, and a faithful crowd attend week in, week out. Well worth going to. Last review November 2001

POD
GLORY €6.50/5.50

Commercial dance from FM 104's Andy Preston. Cheesey fodder aimed at uneducated students. All pints €1.50, student ladies in free before 12, 2 x Vodka and Sharks €6.40. Last review November 2001

RIRA
TONGUE N GROOVE €7

Today FM's Donal Dineen lays on beats, inoffensive hip hop, funk and soul. Hit and miss, but great when it works. Last review October 2001

SWITCH
MIXIT €7

Tech house and chunky prog from the stoical Jay Cisco and pals. Numbers have not been huge, despite heavy advertising on Nova FM, but still not a bad night. Has moved from the slightly more favourable Thursday night slot.

TBMC
SOUL RIOT ☐6.50/4

Different kinds of retro, funk and soul is what's on offer here in both rooms. Not very well suited to this large shoe-box like place. Last review October 2001

TEMPLE THEATRE
MISSING IN ACTION €8

Another night of low-grade chart music and young, wide-eyed students, but with the added bonus of Karlos' r'n'b in the crypt. Anyone looking for more 'serious' music should head elsewhere, though.

TOMATO
SPARK/ZODIAC LOUNGE €8/6

Interesting developement at this Harcourt St venue - they're starting a live indie club out that back which will include the likes of La Rocca and other indie mainstays. It's run in association with Phantom FM, doors 9.30, and it's free into the indie club after. Definitely worth checking out. Corona €3.

WAX
SURESHOT €7

Scott McNaughton bangs out 80s hits for students. There are far worse options out there for the free-loading dirtbag population.

THURSDAYS

KITCHEN
INFLUX €8

With the Kitchen's future uncertain, this musically decent night may suffer even further in the heard count stakes. Residents Barry Redsetta and Philth play house and techno Last review October 2001.

PARNELL MOONEY
GZ €4

Metal and hardrock are laid on by the Ground Zero posse. Live bands and DJs feature, and while the venue is basic to say the least, it is not unsuited to this kind of thing. Last review October 2001.

POD
VIBE €8/5

R'n'b and a little bit of UK garage from Frank Jez and friends. Worth checking out to hear Jez's fine deck skills. Last review September 2001.

THURSDAYS
continued

RED BOX
REVOLVER €6.50

Cheap booze, cheesey music and reasonable numbers make John Reynold's effort to crack the student market a completely forgettable night. 2V+1RB =€6.50. All Other drinks €1.90. Ladies free before 12. Last review November 2001

RIRA
FUNK OFF €8/7

Same old Rira fare - innoffensive rap music and funk for the Rira restaurant-worker crowd to shake their bits to. Resident DJ: Aran McMahon.

SWITCH
PURE

Having left Sean Scully's Central night some time ago and started the massively successful 'Odyssey' in POD on Sundays, Bubbles takes control of Thursdays at Switch. Anybody who has been put off by the hands-in-the-air nature of the tunes that he plays on Sundays has nothing to fear here - good, funky house and tech house are the order here, and nobody in Dublin plays better than Bubbles when he's on form. Recommended.

TBMC
SCREAMADELICA €6.50/5.50

A bit hit and miss in terms of numbers, but definitely a good option for indie lovers on a Thursday. Eamon Sweeney and various members of the Dublin indie scene air their record collections. Last review November 2001.

TOMATO
CHEEZE €TBC

Commercial dance music. Review next month - we promise.

WAX
SOUL PATROL €7

Good deep house with residents Padraig Disconaut, Nello Romano, Billy Scurry and friends. Upcoming guests will include Kerri Chandler and Ron Trent - a fine opportunity to see international guests in a small, decent venue. Check out one-off listings for more info.

>>> NEW REVIEW

IGNITION
VOODOO

Voodoo is a big, mostly empty super-pub stuck way down at the wrong end of the quays. This means that anybody who puts a night on here is probably either mad or foolish, but these Ignition boys don't care, they're going ahead and doing it anyway. The results aren't half bad - they have a good lineup of the usual Dublin techno suspects (Joe McGrath, above, Giles Armstrong, Eamonn Doyle etc) and while the sound system is shit, it at least means you can sit down, have a pint and listen to some excellent music. Techno in Dublin tends to attract a fairly strong following, and there does seem to be a group of hardcore people who are willing to make the treck all the way down the Liffey to this club. Whether there'll be enough to keep Ignition going is another thing. Young techno DJs should note Ignition have regular open-deck sessions.

FRIDAYS

GAIETY
SALSA PALACE €11

Live Salsa bands, some ok DJs and films being shown on a large screen. The crowd are generally a bit on the older side.

ISAAC BUTT
SUPREME €6

Indie disco for those that enjoy this kind of thing. It is not a great venue, but it's better suited to this kind of thing than dance music. Last reviewed November 2001

LOBO
ULTRA LOUNGE €10

This club is explicitly aimed at yuppies and wankers. Lounge music underneath the Morrison Hotel - what could be worse? Proper review next month.

HAM
THE POD €10/8

A good reliable gay night with a large crew of regulars from the makers of Powder Bubble and Horny Organ Tribe. Shay Hannon, Hugh Scully and Tonie Walsh play upbeat, funky house. Good stuff. Last review January 2002

MONO
MOTION €VARIES

The foreign guests tend to be of excellent quality, and at the moment this night is leaning towards tech-house, with Soma artists appearing very regularly. However, on residents only nights in can be quite empty. Check once offs for details.

RED BOX
DEVOTION €9.50/7

Francois Pittion is the resident here, and Ron's Mobile Disco, Chris Roony, and Gedge and Giles Armstrong all appear regularly. Numbers have been quite variable.

WRITERS WANTED:
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CHOICE CUTS
MONO (DOWNSTAIRS)

ALTHOUGH THE competition isn't exactly hot, this is Dublin's best regular hip hop club. Held in the downstairs section of Mono, there is plenty of room to sit down and booze while resident DJs Splyce, Scope, Arvo and guests get busy on the wheels of steel. While there is certainly an element of obsessive trainspotting among some members of the audience, these anorakish freaks are far outnumbered by people who are there to enjoy some decent quality hip hop and get pissed. Regular guests include the talented DJ Mayhem (above) who was recently axed from Irish rap outfit Creative Controle. A bizarre move really, considering he was the only good thing about the band. Overall, a highly recommended alternative to the usual unimaginative house and techno fodder.

RIRA
RINKA €9

Cian O Caoibhan supplies 70s and 80s funk. A slightly more dressed up crowd is found in Rira on the weekend than during the week.

SHOOTERS
OBSESSION €10

Gar Skelly and Paul Coady plus special guests play retro tunes in this shitty, sportsbar like venue

SWITCH
FOOD €9

Good varied breakbeat night with Simon F and guests. A wide range of people play in the upstairs bar, including Splyce and Mayhem. Well worth checking out. Goes on nice and late too. Last reviewed January 2002.

TEMPLE THEATRE
RHYTHM CORPORATION & EUPHORIA €13/10

Dublin's leading r'n'b session. They bring over top Brit DJs every week (Dodge, Keith Lawrence, occasionally Trevor Nelson), lay on podium dancers and fill the place with a crowd of extra-jiggy party-goers. Hard house and banging Trance down in the Crypt. Last reviewed July 2001

TOMATO
FM104 €9

FM104's Andy Preston plays commercial dance.

Glorious Club gossip

THE KITCHEN, which is harder to get into than Zimbabwe at the moment, is set to close for a facelift and a much needed makeover. Rumours are that it'll be turned into another Spy/Renards style spot - hoo-fucking-ray. The makeover is preceded by the departure of manager Ricky Mooney, who has left to get involve with Thing Mote.

Killian (right) of Disque music on the quays (formerly Tag records) is set for another release on his Hidden Fortress record label. The record, due out at the beginning of April is by Borg 9, and will see remixes from Soma's Ewan Pearson and D1 recording's poseur in chief, David Donahue.

Now that Influx and friends have got their own Tivoli venue in which to book Billy Nasty and Dave Clarke ad nauseum, MCD are upping the ante and are revamping the HQ hall of fame. Apparently some stupid amount of cash is being spent on doing the place up in an attempt to turn it into the Irish Fabric - good luck, lads. However, don't expect any sophisticated tech house shenanigans - MCD are intend on trying to eat into The Temple Theatre's dominance of the trance and hard house scene. Just as well, as reports have it that attendance levels in MCD's main club venue, the Ambassador theatre have been less than impressive since it opened.

Just in case John Reynolds and his POD buddies were beginning to feel left out of all this talk, rumours have reached Slate mansions that Lord Longford has bought out Findlater's wine merchants, who occupied part of the same building as the Redbox, and plans to increase the size of the Harcourt St hanger even further.

SATURDAYS

GAIETY
SOUL STAGE €11

A wide selection of jazz, cabaret and soul means that you get your money's worth entertainment-wise and the bar is open until almost 4am. Still has a slightly damp atmosphere.

LIFE BAR
BASIC €8

Good deep and funky house night with the Central and Kungfunky DJs, but numbers have been inconsistent of late.

KITCHEN
FEVER/NEON €13

Eoghan Young plays excellent house at Neon while Podge plays techno-ish stuff at Fever. Neither night are bad, but they suffer if other bigger gigs are happening around town. Still, you could do worse.

MONO
ROTATE €13/10

Raymond Franklin and Paddy Sheridan play alternate weeks here, with the music at the trancier end of progressive spectrum. Mono has recently been done up, but it is still not a great venue.

POD
MODERNISM €13/10

It's Saturday night at the Pod so make an effort if you want to get in. Robbie Butler plays funky and proggy house and a fairly glam crew get well into it.

RED BOX
RED €VARIES

A random enough selection of international big name (often quite good) DJs play the Red Box on a Saturday. See once-offs for more info.

RIRA
SWIRL €10

Lots of yuppie-ish type punters who queue shivering outside in their small clothes. The music inside is good, with Emma C playing a soul-based mix downstairs.

SWITCH
FUNKD'UP €13/11

The Impulsive boys' Saturday night continues to do very well, with Phil Kieran smashing the place up techno and tech-house style over Paddy's weekend. Residents Dean Sherry and Barry Dempsey supply funky but tough techno, and the atmosphere is firmly underground. Rotating DJs play upstairs. Last review March 2002

SHELTER
ROTATING PROMOTERS

Check once off listings for details

TEMPLE THEATRE
SP@CE €1

The biggest names in international hard house and trance send the young maddoutofit crowd nuts.

WAX
REVISION €1

New residents Christian Holmes and DJ Dane take over after The Spy Who Loved Me, the previous club here, got the boot. Avoid places like this on a Saturday night, they're invariably filled with wankers. You must be dressed like a cunt to get in. Despicable stuff.

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It's tough being techno - D1 label boss Eamonn Do

JOY/HI-TECH FUNK
TOMATO

TOMATO CONTINUES to up the tempo on the regular club scene by recruiting none other than techno miserablists D1 in to front their flagship night. For those who have been asleep for the past few years, the no-fun-D1 crew ran one of the most religiously attended Saturday night clubs in recent times in Switch, and this new move should see them draw the same crowd. Bizarrely, in the back room will be Aoife NicCanna and Dave Cleary, who have been running a rocking r'n'b party there for the past few months. How the bumping and grinding black dudes will view the baldy, Detroit techno worshipping skinny boys is uncertain, but this could turn out to be a great night.

SUNDAYS

COYOTE
FRESH 'N' FUNKY €6

Stomping rnb session here with Cork's Stevie G and the regrettable Tony Dixon as residents.

EAMON DORAN'S
MELTING POT €6

Scratch hip hop night that can be a bit shambolic, but sees the welcome return of DJ Splyce. OB, Cee Swift and Dookie also play. Last review December 2002

INTERNATIONAL
LAZYBIRD €4

Excellent indie which sees both live and DJ performances. Recent guests have included Donnacha Costello and Jimmy Behan. Can get a bit chin-strokey at times, but is still a great place to go drinking in if you fancy something a little bit more relaxed. Last reviewed January 2001

MONO
MESSY

Patrick Dempsey and Nick Corrigan have made this an all day session after moving their pre-club booze up from the Thomas House. Loads of DJs play all shades of house throughout the day, and it'll be interesting to see how this one progresses. Last review March 2002

ODDYSSEY
POD €9

DJ Bubbles switches from house early on to a more full-on approach which keeps the Sunday night maniacs happy. Too cheesey for many, but the crowd are up for it and this is easily the most popular night on a Sunday.

SWITCH
LIFT

Decent US house with DJ Akao and friends, but numbers have been quite poor, particularly in comparison to the old Central days. Some decent promotion needed Last reviewed January 2001

TIVOLI
FOOT FETISH

New night with gay-scene veteran Tonie Walsh at the helm. This definitely has potential to become a very decent Sunday night option - full review next month.

WAX
HILTON EDWARDS

Very sceney gay night with Martin McCann and Mark Dixon on the decks. Numbers are good, but straights have reportedly been having trouble getting in.

The Swiss finishing school hadn't been as successful as her father had wished

DJ BARS

MONDAYS
Handel's - Open Deck
Modern Green Bar - Lectro *DJ Mika & Peter Kelly (electro and house)*
Mono - *Tony Dixon (rnb)*
Thomas House - *Eamon Sweeney & friends (indie)*

TUESDAYS
Handel's - Joy *Soul Sister (classic jazz funk)*
Modern Green Bar - Lektricks *with Jimmy Behan & Brian Bradley*
Mono - *Mike McCoy (chart/rnb)*
Thomas House - Home Brew
Gubu - *Jazz and Funk bands*

WEDNESDAYS
Handel's - *Ollie Moore (breaks, beats, reggae and electro)*
Modern Green Bar - Freestyle *(latin/funk)*
Thomas House - Dub Factor *Greg (Ska, Roots, Rhythm)*
Viva - Sound Factory (ground floor) *Eddie Lennon*
Gubu - G Spot *with Busty (variety show open mike)*

THURSDAY
Handel's - *Rocky T. Delgado (electro)*
Modern Green Bar - *DJ Scope (hip hop)*
Mono - Fresh Vinyl Attack *DJ Ilk (eclectic)*
Thomas House - Fatty Fatty, X-ray Specs
Viva - Retrospect *Mark Kelly (indie)*

FRIDAY
GUBU - Kajagubu *Mark Kelly (80s night)*
Handel's - Rocky's Revenge (7.30-9.30) *Rocky T Delgado*
Star DJ 9.30-close *(mixed bag)*
Mono - Choice Cuts *DJs Scope/Splyce/ Mayhem Reggae/jazz/80s glued together w hip hop. €5*
Modern Green Bar - *Fionn Davenport (funk/ disco/hip hop)*
Thomas House - Savage Banter *Leagues*
Viva - *Paul Webb & guests*

SATURDAYS
Handel's - *DJs Dara & Kevin (hip hop, jazz, funk)*
Modern Green Bar - Varies
Mono - *Ronan O (funky house) 5e*
Thomas House - Monkey Tennis *Tom Rixton and Scott* alternates with Thomas the Skank Engine *David Kitt*

SUNDAYS
Handel's - *Diners' Club (technological music) 6pm-9pm; Casa Grande & Co. (Deep Grooves, Soul, Funk.) 9pm - midnight*
Mono - Love to Lounge *Ronan O (Chilled out House and rnb)*

Rocky T Delgado, Thursday in Handel's

BILLY BOB THORNTON

MON APRIL 1 8.30 PM
VICAR ST £27.00

Billy Bob may surprise you. His debut album Private Radio is really not that bad. It is at its best when he doesn't try to emulate his heroes and lets loose tales from the twilight zone of his own imagination. Contrast the frankly lame Angelina with the redneck-Jarvis-Cockerisms of Forever ("Remember them drawers you left in the car / Yeah the ones with the pink feathers around the edge / Now don't you tell a soul but I got 'em on right now.") Thornton includes only two covers on the record: Hank Williams' Lost Highway and He Was A Friend Of Mine - attributed here to Roger McGuinn but actually a rewrite of a Dylan song which in turn started out as a Leadbelly song. Not that we blame him for this oversight. The real surprise is that he even bothers. He gets to shag Angelina Jolie on a regular basis and therefore is to be commended for even knowing what day it is.

MARC CARROLL

WED 3 APR 8PM
WHELANS €15

Whatever complaints Marc Carroll has about his career he can't say he never got any breaks. His first band, Puppy Love Bomb, benefited from some intense local hype but split without ever coming to much. His next band, the Hormones, gleaned some major exposure when they performed in a series-finale episode of US sitcom Friends but again split without leaving much of a mark. As he sets out on his solo career Carroll does not have much of a name to trade on. His record company is therefore publicising his higher profile production team. Carroll's debut solo album, which is due shortly, was mixed by Lou Giordano (whose former credits include Husker Du and the Goo Goo Dolls) and features the production skills of Steve Power (Robbie Williams.) It is a combination that suggests Carroll is still taking the overcrowded punk pop route he chose for the Hormones' fairly decent 1998 album Don't Let Them Get You Down.

THE GOMEZ HOMIES ARE BACK

GOMEZ WITH SPECIAL GUESTS MELATON

WED 10 APR
AMBASSADOR €28.20 - €30.20

The Irish warm-up tour is a favoured comeback route for British bands who've been out of the loop for a while. They can roadtest their new material on relatively easy audiences and basically figure out if anyone remembers who they are. Thus Gomez's six-date jaunt around the country. Their last album, the disappointing Liquid Skin, was released in 1999 and we've had only on EP of new material since. In spite of this, ticket sales for the tour so far would indicate that the band are far from forgotten.

Their debut album, Bring It On was a surprise hit in 1998. With its driving acoustic riffs and bluesy harmonies the album sounded like it had been made by a Hispanic motorcycle gang. It was bewildering to learn that it was in fact a practically homemade recording by a couple of pug-ugly English teenagers. This information almost mars the haunting Tijuana Lady by forcing you to wonder where Ben Ottewell picked up his pronunciation of 'Me-iico' and to notice that he may actually be singing of an "enchilada desperado."

Go-mez with me head

There was quite a commotion therefore when the album beat off competition from The Verve and Massive Attack to win the Mercury Music Prize that year. (It was the first time an album recorded using empty Clearasil bottles had taken the award, or some such feat.) The TV presenters and label execs may just have got it right though - almost four years later the album still has an edgy, stoned cool about it. Throw in a sax-tastic new single (Shot Shot) and a psychedelic-country album (In Our Gun) and suddenly we're rather looking forward to having them back.

MARIA DOYLE KENNEDY

SAT 6 APR 8.30 PM
VICAR ST. €15

Maria Doyle Kennedy was a founder member of the Hothouse Flowers and an ex-Commitment-ette whose version of I Never Loved A Man (The Way I Loved You) found its way onto soul compilations alongside Aretha Franklin, Billie Holiday and Ella Fitzgerald. She can therefore justifiably claim music as her first love. Throughout the last decade though, (as the public grew tired of the warblings of Andrew Strong et al.) acting has clearly been a profitable sideline for her. Television roles in programmes like Father Ted, Queer As Folk and (most recently) No Tears, as well as appearances in films like The General, made her probably the most successful former member of Dublin's Hardest Working Band. Now, after years of arseing around with the shitty Black Velvet Band she has released her debut solo album, Charm, and won rave reviews from the likes of Woman's Way. "The album was made because the songs just wouldn't stay in anymore, they had to come out," she gushed proudly about the album like someone who has just blown a particularly noxious fart. This is something she could have tried harder to keep in.

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CACHAÍTO LÓPEZ FEAT.MIGUEL 'ANGA' DIAZ

SUN 7 APRIL
VICAR ST €30(SEATED) €24(STANDING)

Note Productions continue in their quest to put on anybody who has even farted beside the Buena Vista social club, and this time round they're bringing over Orlando 'Cachaíto' López, the BV's bass player. Having played on most of the albums and appeared in the Vim Wenders film, López recently released his solo debut album to critical acclaim. Veering towards the more improvisational jazz end of the Buena Vista spectrum, he'll be appearing tonight with a 10 piece latin band, and while we're not going to pretend we've heard his solo stuff, most of Note's previous shows have been top class and this should be too.

COLM QUEARNEY

WED 10 APR 7.30PM
TBMC €TBC

This new album being promoted here is Quearney's first outing as a frontman and the ex-Lir man clearly feels he has something to prove. The 27-year-old's reputation is as a competent and talented session musician rather than a songwriter. Having said that, his time touring and recording with Rory Gallagher, Jimmy Faulkner and Holly Johnson seem to have rubbed off. The album, The World's Not Round, is the product of over a year's work and features the talents of highly rated musicians like Conor Brady, Justin Carroll and John Boyle. Lir weren't exactly the Beta Band in their creative approach but as a solo artist Quearney has, by his own admission, veered even closer to the middle of the road. There are some nice moments, but it sacrifices inspiration for technical proficency and suggests that the axeman-for-hire role might be the better route for him.

JULIAN COPE

THU 11 APR
VICAR ST €27

Julian Cope first unveiled his fucked-up view of the world in The Teardrop Explodes (managed by Bill Drummond, trainspotters), and has continued his psychedelic adventures throughout his solo career. Out on his own, though, Cope nearly imploded as his LSD intake increased to the point where he was nearly non-functional (he didn't call an album Fried just for the hell of it). Unlike role model Syd Barrett, though, Cope pulled himself together and released a string of deranged but brilliant albums of skewed pop. Added to that, his book Krautrocksampler is largely responsible for the reassessment of the early-70s German rock which is all the rage nowadays. This evening's mix of music and monologue should be highly entertaining, although those sensitive to day-glo clothing are advised to bring shades.

AZYMUTH

FRI 12 APRIL 7.30PM
REDBOX €15

Azymuth do not sound like typical Red Box fare. Formed in Rio in the early '70s their sound incorporates samba, bossa nova, electronica and a lot of ever-so-slightly kitsch jazz. Nice! Already megastars in their own country it was the 1979 single "Jazz Carnival" which earned them international recognition. Since reactivating in the mid-90s though they have worked with producers like Roni Size and Kenny Dope, and their music, although unmistakably rooted in seventies funk has a surprisingly contemporary feel. The inclusion on the bill of young Dublin six-piece 8-Ball (who have already been compared to Blue States and the Beta Band) makes this pretty good value all round at only □15. So if you go to only one Brazilian prog-jazz gig this year, make it this one.

THE CHRISTIANS

SAT 13 APR 8.30 PM
VICAR ST €22.50

Remember the Christians? No, not the child-loving chancers whose message of peace and love we have routinely ignored for the last millennium. These are the Liverpudlian trio whose socially conscious anti-Thatcher lyrics were cancelled out by their yuppie-ish blend of soul and pop. Best remembered for their 1988 cover of the Isley Brothers' Harvest For The World. Well they're back and they're absolutely delighted not to have a record deal now because it allows them to play the 'intimate' venues they missed first time around. This means you can expect crowds of 30-something couples with no taste in music who are only there to relive some moment they had back when they thought they were cool. Totally shite. Turn the other cheek now you bastards!

DAMIEN RICE

SAT 13, SUN 14 APR 8PM
WHELAN'S €

You wouldn't buy a used car from Damien Rice. At one stage, while fronting Kildare based band Juniper, he was insisting that everybody called him 'Dodima', and half of the time spoke in a language he had devised himself whilst in the depths of some raging mania. He has put all that behind him, however, and his subsequent solo career has seen him battle his way back from being the kind of singer-song writer who would be booed off Grafton St to enjoying a spate of sellout gigs and a well received album. This doesn't mean he's any good, though - his brand of overly-sincere, pretentious folk is lapped up by the kind of ass-holes who tell you to stop talking at David Gray concerts. His one redeeming feature is a good voice, but this should still be approached cautiously.

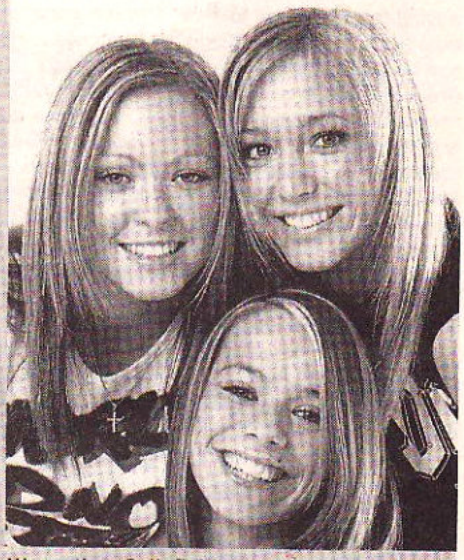
AN ATOMIC DISASTER LOOMS

ATOMIC KITTEN

WED 3 APR
AMBASSADOR €33.20

From the Supremes to Destiny's Child and even All Saints, all-singing girlbands have a slightly more respectable history than their male counterparts. Having said that, it's fair to say that none of Atomic Kitten aspires to be the next Diana Ross. Masterminded by Andy McCluskey (ex-OMD), their goals are seemingly more along the lines of getting impregnated by someone famous, getting into the celebrity magazines and landing a job in kids TV. So that's mission accomplished Kerry Katona.

They do benefit from one or two of the perks of not being a boyband though. Critics are not so hung up on whether they write their own songs, have any views on the Middle East or are probably gay. Neither of the former are even expected of girlies and if they have any lesbian tendencies at all then it's, "Waay-haaay!! - Let's shoot some pictures!" Which is all just as well, since Atomic Kitten are a trio of brainless purveyors of soulless music. Some critics contend that they convey a redeeming our-gang-against-the-world spirit but so do the Kilkenny camogie team and you don't see them in the NME. With tickets priced at a shocking □33.20, you have until April 3rd to convert that younger sister/niece/gay brother to death metal (or Marc Carroll.) Because this will be a teeny-pop evening from hell.



Worse than Sellafield

TALES FROM THE DARK SIDE

THE HANDSOME FAMILY

THU 11 APR 7.30PM
TBMC €TBC

THE UNDERBELLY of American music contains a widely ignored patchwork of eccentric variations and regional oddities. The alt.country label lazily applied to the Handsome Family does not do justice to their strange and dark blend of traditional country and bluegrass. And it certainly doesn't prepare you for their fucking scary line in ghost and murder ballads. Nick Cave's albums sound like a particularly mild Disney soundtrack in comparison.

The lyrics are the work of Rennie Sparks, a fiction writer originally from New York. The deadpan baritone is her husband Brett Sparks, a Texan ex-oil rigger. And their 1998 breakthrough album, Through The Trees, was the product of his nervous breakdown and diagnosis with manic depression. While their subsequent offerings haven't been quite as dark they are still a million miles from the mellowed-out contentedness of Lambchop's Kurt Wagner. Like the White Stripes' punk blues, their style is one that is either timeless or plain old-fashioned, depending on your perspective. But it is eerie and startling either way. Now if they could only colour-co-ordinate those outfits.

Hanging with the Handsomes

SOPHIE ELLIS BEXTOR

MON 15 APR
OLYMPIA €24.10

The Blue Peter daughter with the famously wide face and sultry good looks performs her first headlining Irish gig in the Olympia this month. Having crooned along to shite indie (with Theaudience) and pop house (on Spiller's Groovejet) she is now trying her hand at what she terms 'sophisticated pop' - that is a couple of vaguely hummable 80s-influenced tunes performed with a kind of disinterested attitude. In fairness Groovejet was a cool single and we should be eternally grateful it kept the odious Victoria Beckham from getting a number one. Sultry good looks and a disinterested attitude can only get you so far (well, as far as a nomination for Best British Female Artist at the Brits actually) and Ellis-Bextor's album is really, really dire. She comes across less like her idol Madonna and more like a latter day Nico. Not German or addicted to heroin unfortunately, but cheekbones, pout and precious little else.

THE HARLEM GOSPEL CHOIR

TUE 16 - FRI 19, SUN 20 APRIL
OLYMPIA €22.24 - €24.74

The Harlem Gospel Choir return to Dublin after only a few months for five nights at the Olympia, commencing April 16th. With the suspicious (or possibly divine) ability to be in several places at the one time, the choir are truly the Riverdance of the whole Lord-praising scene. Selected from the finest singers and musicians of the Black Churches in Harlem the group are actually a registered charity in the States ("Support the Choir with a donation and receive a blessing!" their website suggests.) The mogul behind the whole operation is Allen Bailey, an industry veteran whose past paymasters include Michael Jackson, Mr. T and Don King. Since their inception in 1986 the brothers and sisters have performed for the Pope and Nelson Mandela, and even appeared on U2's Rattle & Hum. So for any J1 students who ever stopped into a Baptist church service while they were in the States this is another chance to clap your hands, raise your voice and testify.

NEW FLESH

SAT 20 APR
SHELTER €

"It could only have been made in the UK", claims the gushing press release, "a fantastic amalgam of hip hop, dancehall, UK garage, soul and funk, a blend straight out of soundsystem culture". So what'll it be - a rare piece of genuinely decent UK hip-hop or more unlistenable, plodding nobody-takes-us-english-rappers-seriously bollox? The Slate is fucked if it knows, but seeing as they're signed to Big Dada, home of Roots Manuva, you can expect plenty of electronic, oblique beats as opposed to the particularly drab crap that Mark B and Blade churn out over and over. For the record, New Flesh are producer Part 2, and rappers Toastie Taylor and Juice Aleem and they've released an album called Understanding, which also features guest appearances from Roots Manuva and Gift of the Gab from Blackalicious.

TEENAGE FANCLUB & JA FAIR PRESENT "WORDS OF WISDOM & HOPE"

SAT 20 APR '02
WHELANS €18.50

In their good-at-what-they-do consistency, their Scottishness and general inoffensiveness Teenage Fanclub are the Travis of old school indie (which is at least better than actually being Travis.) And what they do is to retread the steps of the Beatles, the Byrds and Big Star in pursuit of the perfect jangly pop moment. Jad Fair (Half Japanese) is the godfather of primitive American rock, loudly proclaimed as an influence by Kurt Cobain among many others. A prolific lyricist, artist and photographer he also tends to work with just about anyone who asks. Rather than reconciling the irreconcilable, his full-on vocals and stream of consciousness lyrics push the Fannies' pop classicism into the background on Words Of Wisdom and Hope, their LP collaboration. Good, but maybe one for the anoraks.

ANDY IRVINE & CHRIS WOOD

TUE 23 APR 8PM
WHELANS €TBC

Andy Irvine is perhaps best known for his time in seminal trad group Planxty, writing such song as You Rambling Boys of Pleasure and As I Roved Out. Unlike other Planxty alumni he hasn't gone on to massive mainstream success, but he has continued to record and tour, both in Ireland and abroad (especially continental Europe), retaining a devoted following. His voice and playing (whether of guitar, mandolin, bouzouki, balalaika or other funny Eastern European instruments) are well suited to the quiet melancholia of his songs. He is an impressive stage performer, as the new generation of fans he acquired when supporting Will Oldham last year will attest. Chris Wood, meanwhile, is apparently some English folkie.

HIGH LLAMAS, JIMMY BEHAN & THE JIMMY CAKE

WED 24 APR
VICAR ST €24

Since the demise of Microdisney, Sean O'Hagan has been trying his very hardest to be Brian Wilson. His obsession with the sound of the late 60s Beach Boys sometimes borders on the psychotic (creepily appropriate, given his choice of role model), which means that despite their original songs, the High Llamas are little more than a Beach Boys cover band. Not necessarily a bad thing, but O'Hagan also overproduces everything he touches, making it so spotless and immaculately polished that you can practically eat off of it. So if you like your pop technically perfect but devoid of originality, then get your ticket now. Support on the night comes from the two Jimmies, the ever-expanding Cake and Aphex-lite Behan.

MARY BLACK

TUE 23, THU 24 - SAT 26 APRIL
OLYMPIA €25.39 - €31.11

Trying to explain to your parents why you don't like Mary Black is like trying to them why you don't want them to come along to the teenage disco with you. To use that nonsensical phrase favoured by Ed Byrne, "If you don't know why then there's no point in me telling you." Mary's fans can point to her early work with De Daanan, her nine platinum solo albums and her collaborations with Joan Baez, Emmylou Harris and Van Morrison. And just as surely, Mum and Dad can point out that that you'll have a lift there and back, be kept out of trouble and be safe from bullies and the boys who somehow get the smell of their cigarettes onto your clothes. The point is so blindingly obvious it can be difficult to articulate. Where do we start? Mary, you have a lovely voice, a legion of admirers and a house full of awards. But to anyone under 40 your music is about as appealing as washing the dishes.

DO MAKE SAY THINK

THU 25 APRIL 8PM
WHELANS €

Like Godspeed You Black Emperor!, Do Make Say Think hail from Canada (Toronto, specifically). And they record for GYBE!'s Constellation label. Think you've got them pegged? Probably not: Unlike GYBE!, DMST don't pile on the grand-artistic-statement shite or classical pretensions; they just get down to making good rock music. To be sure, they certainly seem to suffer from the same wankiness that other like-minded bands do. Long meandering pieces that go nowhere and endless tempo-shifts aren't uncommon. But in general the druggy psychedelic quality that most of their songs have works well. Their last Dublin gig was great, and word on the street says the upcoming & Yet & Yet album is brilliant, so this gig is definitely one to check out.

LOUDON WAINWRIGHT III

FRI 26 APR 8.30 PM
VICAR ST €24.00

Almost 40 years since he took up songwriting to repay his da for bailing him out of jail on a pot charge, Loudon Wainwright is still trading on his warped charisma and seductive sense of humour. Since starting out as a Dylan-inspired folk singer, he has been a 70s lounge act, a TV actor, an off-Broadway theatre star, an 80s rocker (with the help of Richard Thompson) and most recently a writer of topical political songs for ABC's Nightline. His son Felix - who he had with singer and ex-wife Anna McGarrigle - is also an established singer-songwriter, with last years Poses scoring major critical acclaim. Once an embarrassment to his parents, now an embarrassment to his kids - you've got to hand it to the man.

SUSUMU YOKATA

SAT 27 APR 7.30PM
SHELTER €18.80

Unfortunately not a live 'performance' by the infamous Japanese schoolgirl porn-queen of a very similar name (now that we're officially a race-hate mag we can afford to say "they all sound the same, don't they?"). Instead it's gentle ambient meanderings from a complete nobody. Well, what do you expect from a promotions company, Amanda Guestlist, whose idea of a big name, stadium power bums-on-seats guest is Jimi Tenor? If you've got the patience however, you'll be well rewarded - it's excellent stuff. His Sakura album was made 'electronic album of the year 2000' by The Wire and it's all extremely pleasant stuff pitched somewhere between new wave and ambient pioneers like Eno and Yokotas own comrade, Japanese electronics genius Tomita.

RETURN OF THE BUFFALO SOLDIER

GRANT LEE PHILLIPS

FRI 12 APRIL 8.30 PM
VICAR ST €24.00

JUST AS Nevermind can be blamed for everything from Green Day to JJ72, so its ugly sister Pearl Jam's Ten spawned a parallel strain of hairy folkish guitar bands from Counting Crows to Gomez. Although Grant Lee Buffalo - led by Californian Grant Lee Phillips - were of the latter tradition, the now defunct trio possessed a lightness and delicacy of touch that marked them out from their rivals.

Phillips influences went beyond the usual American touchstones to include David Bowie and John Lennon. And tellingly, when success arrived for the band in 1993 it was on this side of the Atlantic. While their debut Fuzzy was a modest hit here (the Neil Young-esque title track is still a student jukebox fixture) the more cinematic follow-up Mighty Joe Moon established them in the US, with

Don't take him for Granted

Phillips taking Rolling Stone's Best Male Vocalist award in 1995. The band spent most of the mid-90s touring with REM, Smashing Pumpkins and Pearl Jam before fizzling out in 1999. Since then Phillips has been performing at Largos, the LA club where he first made his name. Free from the pressures of record company demands he has come up with a fresh batch of acoustic songs. Timed to coincide with the European release of his solo debut Mobilize, this is Phillip's second appearance at Vicar Street since the demise of GLB. With his good live reputation and genuine affection for the city and the venue, this gig is definitely recommended.

WERNER'S MURDERED HIS REP

INVINCIBLE
DIRECTOR: WERNER HERZOG
STARRING: TIM ROTH & JOUKO AHOLA

Back in the 70s, Werner Herzog was responsible for the insane genius of Fitzcarraldo and Aguirre, The Wrath of God. Now all he can come up with is this- clumsy pain in the arse of a movie. Everybody knows that strong people are thick, and big Jouko Ahola (who plays Polish strong man Zishe) is no exception. You can't blame the lad, he's a Finnish weight-lifter, (two time winner of the World's Strongest Man) with no acting experience, and Herzog asked him to play a Pole who speaks bad English. Why it was decided that these actors would speak in English when they clearly can't is an absolute mystery. Maybe Herzog thought the Americans would like it.

Zishe is happy enough working as a blacksmith, but after he wins a strength contest in the local circus a rich German impresario entices him to Berlin. On arriving he is installed as a Teutonic hero in a dodgy club run by the magician Hanussen (Tim Roth) for the amusement of those nasty Nazi types. Zishe has two problems

A Jewish guy dressed up as an Aryan hero

facing him: firstly he's Jewish and has an inkling that the Nazis have something up their sleeves for his kind; secondly the script is appalling. It claims to be based on a true story, but surely in real life no one ever spoke lines as pathetic as these. Roth looks promising as the power-mad wannabe Nazi with a suspect past, but ends up overacting to compensate for the dross that surrounds him.

There's something touching about the way the unassuming Ahola ambles through all the evil surrounding him in Berlin; he seems almost apologetic for getting mixed up in this overlong mess. As a simple story of a naïve hero this might have worked in the hands of a less ambitious director, but Herzog makes a ham-fisted attempt at epic and comes away with his reputation sadly diminished.

ICE AGE
DIRECTOR: CHRIS WEDGE
STARRING: VOICES OF RAY ROMANO & JOHN LEGUIZAMO

Even though Ice Age is made by 20th Century Fox, it is very much standard Disney fare, with some very clear similarities to The Jungle Book. The story centres on the coming together of an unlikely trio who are intent on a good deed. Manfred the Mammoth, Sid the Sloth and Diego the Sabre-Toothed Tiger discover a baby washed up on the shore of a riverbank and decide to return it to its human family. As unlikely as this is - no more unlikely than a narcoleptic princess or a young girl living with seven midgets - it makes for a nice story that's sure to keep the kids happy and the shelves fully stocked with spin-off merchandise. The animation is flawless and very distinctive, and while it is basically a predictable film for kids (and people on acid), it's definitely worth a look. Ice Age will almost certainly be a success, possibly creating a new animated hero in the form of Scrat - a hapless, vaguely psychotic squirrel that spends the entire movie chasing down acorns.

IMMY NEUTRON: BOY GENIUS
)IRECTOR: JOHN A. DAVIS
STARRING: VOICES OF PATRICK STEWART & MARTIN SHORT

Designed to appeal to the most hyperactive, fizzy-drink addicted kind of eight-year old, Jimmy Neutron is a terrifying glimpse into the psyche of American youth. It's a seemingly endless barrage of screaming annoying fucking children tearing around the universe in pursuit of, get this, their parents! The reason for this ridiculous quest is that young nerd Jimmy, who's a whiz with computers, has stupidly alerted some aliens to the earth's whereabouts. The audience's hopes are briefly raised by the possibility of the aliens massacring all the annoying little shits, but unfortunately the martians kidnap their parents instead. The aliens want to sacrifice the parents to some kind of huge chicken-god, but moronic Jimmy and his clichéd sidekicks arrive just in time to rescue them. By comparison, the aliens are quite likeable and you feel sorry for them when they are deprived of their fun. The graphics are quite like that garish video for BlackHole Sun. But apart from a fantastic scene where the kids convert the contents of a theme park into an intergalactic fleet, they can't excuse the general awfulness on show. If you liked Toy Story or Monsters Inc., keep it to yourself, but don't go wasting money on this. If you have children, don't let them go to the cinema until this dogshit has passed.

Somebody stand on this Jimmy Neutron shithead

CINEMA PHONE NUMBERS

Classic: 492 3699
IFC: 679 3477
IMC (DL): 280 7777
Ormonde: 278 0000
Santry: 842 8844
Savoy: 874 6000
Screen: 672 5500
Star Cen: 605 5700
UCI (Blan): 1850 525354
UCI (Clon): 848 5122
UCI (Tall): 459 8400
UGC (Parn): 872 8444

NOT QUITE THE FULL MONTE

In page folder

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO

DIRECTOR: KEVIN REYNOLDS
STARRING: RICHARD HARRIS, JIM CAVIEZEL & GUY PEARCE

BORING HOLLYWOOD new-boy Jim Caviezel plays Dantes, the hero in this French tale of vengeance and redemption. Several people have tried to turn Dumas's novel into a movie, and this is another failed effort, with Caviezel's stupidity (he behaves like a retarded giraffe for most of the film) standing out. Having been tricked by his friend Mondego, Dantes winds up spending thirteen years in the notorious French prison, Chateau D'If. Guy Pearce as the scurrilous cunt Mondego minces around like a cross between Iago and Graham Norton. Richard Harris, on the other hand, is great as the old git who helps Dantes with a plan to escape the prison and get even with the bastards who put him there. The prison scenes are fairly predictable, although they do incorporate a bizarre homage to The Karate Kid. When Dantes eventually escapes he has transformed himself into the cool, kick-ass Count who sweeps about the place scowling and taking out his enemies. Despite this transformation, one of the enduring mysteries of the film is how the Count avoids being recognised by his old friends and adversaries. Even the girl he was shagging initially fails to make the connection between the Count and the young man she let into her knickers all those years ago. Although this is annoying it could be overlooked if the acting was up to scratch, but unfortunately it isn't. Particularly bad performances are those by Henry Cavill as Albert and Dagmara Dominczyk as Mercedes. The plot isn't developed properly and as a consequence many of the characters act with no apparent motive. While it will no doubt become a Sunday afternoon hangover treat to be watched in front of the fire with your elderly parents, it certainly doesn't deserve a trip all the way to the cinema.

LAST ORDERS

DIRECTOR: FRED SCHEPISI
STARRING: MICHAEL CAINE, BOB HOSKINS, HELEN MIRREN, DAVID HEMMINGS, KELLY REILLY & TOM COURTENAY

Top-notch drama about a bunch of likeable old cockney geezers who spend most of their waking lives down the boozer. They are forced into an unexpected change of scenery when Jack Dodds (Caine) discovers he's dying of cancer and asks his mates to scatter his ashes on Margate Sands. As the lads head out of London to follow Caine's last orders, the landscape inspires flashbacks to their childhoods. After stopping for a few too many pints en route, old rivalries come to the fore. Scchepisi manages to get the most out of the famous cast, giving them plenty of space to fill out their characters. Maggie Smith puts in an understated performance as Dodds's long-suffering wife, and beefy Ray Winstone shows his soft side as the adopted son. Based on a Graham Swift novel, Last Orders does well to avoid cheap sentimentality, exposing a shady history of adultery and the neglect of a handicapped child. It won't break any box-office records, but it's good to see a film set in London that has a bit of subtlety and doesn't involve pathetic gangster clichés.

E.T.

DIRECTOR: STEVEN SPIELBERG
STARRING: YODA & DREW BARRYMORE

After bringing out that piece of shit A.I. last year, it's not surprising to see Steven Spielberg plundering the archives in an attempt to claw back a bit of credibility. By re-releasing his best movie, the billionaire director is going down same road as Coppola, who recently added some bits and pieces onto Apocalypse Now and sent it out for a second viewing. As is obligatory with these ventures, they throw in some 'exciting new footage' that was sensibly deemed too shit to use first time around, and invariably still is. So we get the alien goofing around in the bath, and a few extra shots of him hiding from the faceless baddies at the beginning. Unlike George Lucas' irritating additions to Star Wars, these new scenes don't piss you off too much and, even though everyone's seen ET a million times, it's still a classic fairy tale.

THE SHIPPING NEWS

DIRECTOR: LASSE HALLSTROM
STARRING: KEVIN SPACEY, JUDI DENCH & JULIANNE MOORE

Despite boasting a star-stuffed cast and E. Annie Proulx's Pulitzer-prize winning novel to hang a script around, The Shipping News is as dull as the title sounds. It's the story of a depressed New Yorker called Quoyle (Kevin Spacey) who decides to return to his ancestral home in Newfoundland to rediscover his soul after his wife (Cate Blanchett) dies in a car crash. With his family in tow, he soon establishes himself among the local halfwits as a newspaper reporter. Pete Postlethwaite, Judi Dench and Rhys Ifans do their best to contribute to the atmosphere of worthiness and intensity. Julianne Moore provides the tortured love interest as Wavey and the whole lot of them adopt moody windswept poses for the remainder.

WAKING LIFE

DIRECTOR: RICHARD LINKLATER
STARRING: WILEY WIGGINS

'If you're into the kind of film that has almost no plot, but isn't short on quotes from a lorry-load of artists, philosophers, whatevers, then look no further than this arty animated movie. The film begins with an unnamed person being knocked down by a car. After that we are left guessing as to whether he's dead, dreaming or still alive. He meets a series of high IQ eggheads along the way. Bob Sabiston's slick artwork probably had a fair bit to do with the prizes. it won at Venice and Sundance. The animated characters wobble on the screen - in fact nothing ever stays still - and after a few beers this might be too visually challenging. If life is a dream, is life one moment, drawn out over a lifetime? When you die do you dream and find yourself unable to return to your dream body? Are we all dead and dreaming a collective dream? Is this a load of indulgent navel gazing? Probably. If it wasn't animated would anybody bother their holes watching it? No.

IT'S A ROYALE WITH NO CHEESE

THE ROYAL TENENBAUMS

DIRECTOR: WES ANDERSON
STARRING: GENE HACKMAN, BEN STILLER, GWYNNETH PALTROW, OWEN WILSON, LUKE WILSON, ANJELICA HUSTON & BILL MURRAY

Who knows what the fuck is going on here?

Sweet mother of fuck. An American comedy you can enjoy without leaving your brain in the cloakroom. Anderson established his credentials with Rushmore, but this is a much more accomplished affair, with great performances from everyone in the cast, and Gene Hackman finally getting a role that befits him. Hackman plays Royal, the dissipated patriarch of the weirdest clan this side of The Adams Family.

The kids are all prodigies: there's Chas, (Stiller), a financial expert by the age of ten; Richie, (Luke Wilson), a national tennis champion; and the adopted Margot, (Paltrow), an acclaimed playwright. The pressures of early fame take their toll, and this is where the story really begins. Chas lost his wife in a plane crash and is now a safety nut. Richie's career mysteriously collapsed and he's now a bearded hippy aboard a luxury liner musing over his unrequited love for his sister. Margot has sunk into the role of depressed wife of a psychologist, the outstanding Bill Murray. Royal is also down on his luck. Divorced, estranged from his kids and broke he decides its time to face the family, only to find his wife is preparing to remarry. He convinces her he's dying and she takes him in. One by one all the family return home and their attempts at reconciliation are bizarre and sometimes hilarious.

While it's not exactly packed with sidesplitting jokes, the film works because of the strength of the direction and the perfect casting; many of the performances are career bests, (Paltrow, Stiller, both Wilsons, and maybe even Hackman). Owen Wilson gets the funniest, if smallest part, as the fat kid next door, Eli, who always wanted to be a Tenenbaum and grew up to be a drugged-out novelist. It's a film full of brilliant little details, and the humour is balanced with some affecting scenes. Movie of the month by a long shot.

ALI G IN DA HOUSE

DIRECTOR: MARK MYLOD
STARRING: SACHA BARON COHEN & CHARLES DANCE

The predictable Ali G sell-out arrives just in time to cash in before the joke is well and truly over. Any pretensions to satire which Ali G once had are happily abandoned in favour of the stupidest jokes to hit the screen since There's Something About Mary. Batty boys, bitches, Uzis, big spliffs, and blow jobs involving dogs and horses are all to the fore and you have to laugh, even if it's all utterly forgettable. Ali is happy in his job teaching the children of Staines how to swear and stay off the crack when news comes in that the evil government is planning to shut down his beloved community centre. His attempt at peaceful protest attracts the attention of the Chancellor of the Exchequer and his sexy bitch Rhona Mitra, who's been sent in to find someone 'in touch' with the Staines youth. Ali's clearly the man for the job, but doesn't realise that the Chancellor has sneaky plans to get himself into power. The plot is an excuse for Ali to get into parliament and generally take the piss. Along his way he nicks a stash of skunk and porn from Customs, brings together the rival Staines posses, and exposes the Chancellor's plot. But could he be losing touch with his roots? Who gives a toss? It'll be interesting to see if Cohen can progress from here or whether he'll go the way of Alan Partridge. Funny in parts, but the desperate plea to buy the merchandise at the end may be a little too close to the truth.

Y TU MAMA TAMBIEN

DIRECTOR: ALFONSO CUARON
STARRING: DIEGO LUNA, GAEL GARCIA BERNAL & MARIBEL VERDU

Mexican coming of age road movie which looks set to follow on from the success of last year's Amores Perros. The presence of Bernal and the Mexico City setting make comparisons unavoidable, but while Amores Perros dressed up the misery of poor Mexicans and their dogs as Tarantino-style entertainment this is an altogether more subtle and intelligent film. Julio (Bernal) and Tenoch (Luna) are best mates, gearing up for one last summer of debauchery before college. With their girlfriends away things are not looking too promising until they encounter Spanish stunner Luisa (Verdu). She's more than ten years older than the lads and married, but this doesn't stop them doing their best to chat her up. It doesn't look like they've got a cat in hell's chance when they invite her to a beach which blatantly doesn't exist, but when she finds out her husband's two-timing her she decides to take up their offer. The trio head off in search of the mythical beach, and much shagging ensues. In fact the whole film is full of messy, confused teenage sex. Feisty Luisa takes it upon herself to educate the boys in how to please a woman. The predictable jealousies and petty rivalries ensue, but perspective is provided by setting the whole trip in the poorest parts of rural Mexico. The ending is sad without being corny, and this looks like being the best thing on in the IFC this month.

REVIEWS

LOVERS AT VERSAILLES

BY BERNARD FARRELL
DIRECTED BY MARK LAMBERT
ABBEY THEATRE
FINISHES 4 MAY €25-15

This play is aimed squarely at aul' dears and the half-dead corpses they drag around with them to every new show at the Abbey or Peacock. Therefore it is largely uninteresting, but may prove a little racy for the over-70's target audience. The action opens at the 'Serendipity' night club where we find two sisters: the dowdy one and her girl-about-town-yet-knickers-in-place sister. Most of the time it's hot bird gets all the dick, boring sister drinks Bulmers at home. But on this particular night doesn't the dull one meet a lovely fella. And you see they both love the song 'Strangers in the Night'. But the funny thing is that he always sings 'Lovers at Versailles' instead of 'Lovers at first sight'. Oh, he's a card! The play takes us through a series of family relationship problems which have come to a head with the death of the father (who the mother suspects of extra-marital banging before he went). One story weaves in and out of the other revolving around the father's shop out the back where he did all the fiddling with his lady customers.The story easily switches between flashbacks and the period after the father's death. It's well acted, with a fine set and the story keeps the audience going to the end if you like that sort of thing. Basically your usual unchallenging but innoffensive Abbey fare.

A Delicate Balance

A DELICATE BALANCE

BY EDWARD ALBEE
STARRING: FEDELMA CULLEN, DEIDRE DONNELLY, BARRY MCGOVERN, ENA MAY
FOCUS THEATRE €10-16, FINISHES 28 APRIL

Ancient American playwright Edward Albee's latest is the story of an ageing American couple whose lives are dreary enough without the intervention of the rest of the family. Agnes (Ena May) is the prim and proper wife of gangly, reticent Tobias (Barry McGovern). Their dull existence is enlivened by the presence of Agnes' alcoholic sister, Claire (Deidre Donnelly) who does her best to inject some humour into the old farts before they die. Naturally Agnes hates her sisters guts and wants to get rid of her, as does her husband, and the news that daughter Julia is on her way home after the failure of her fourth marriage hardly cheers them up. The arrival of next-door neighbours from hell Edna (Fedelma Cullen) and Harry (Philip O'Sullivan) is the icing on the cake; they complain of being 'afraid' and insist that they be allowed to move in on a permanent basis. There's something decidedly spooky about them, and their presence seems to infect the house. The action revolves around the drink's cabinet, there is much discussion of impending insanity and death and it's only a matter of time before someone flips and pulls out a gun. It's all well-worn territory since Long Day's Journey Into Night, but there's enough in the characters to rescue it from predictability. At two and a half hours it's heavy going, but it's the most interesting thing on this month.

A IS FOR AXE

BY MIKE MCCORMACK
DIRECTED BY ROISIN MCBROINN
BEWLEY'S LUNCHTIME THEATRE
1.00PM, €10, INCLUDING LIGHT LUNCH

There seems to have been an epidemic lately of Irish writers describing the surreal rural netherworld of twitching net curtains, Sunday mass and the G.A.A club through the meanderings of the local mad-

FRIEL FEELS HIMSELF

TWO PLAYS AFTER: THE BEAR & AFTERPLAY

BY BRIAN FRIEL
DIRECTED BY ROBIN LEFEVRE
STARRING: JOHN HURT & PENELOPE WILSON
THE GATE

Friel continues his Chekhov obsession with diminishing returns. The Bear is a faithful adaptation of Chekhov's play about a drunken landowner pressing a prim widow for money he is owed, who predictably falls for her. It's a conventional 'battle of the sexes' scenario. You could say that Chekhov exposes the foibles and underlying tensions involved in everyday bourgeois life, but after half an hour of this turgid shite, chances are you won't. The fact that this is "Chekhov" adapted by "Friel" in the "Gate" gives license to the audience to guffaw (and they really do guffaw) at every sign-posted bit of slapstick. The only highlight is Brennan's testosterone filled performance, from an actor who in other plays has come across as a total ponce.

The second play is Friel's take on what happened to Chekhov's characters after they appeared in Uncle Vanya and the Three Sisters. A man and a woman meet in a hotel and exchange life stories, embellished so as to avoid admitting what failures they are. By the end they expose the truth of their sad existences to each other and ruminate on an old age that will be "a vast tundra of aloneness and loneliness"! Some of the script is hard enough to read let alone say on stage. This is an academic exercise full of Chekovian in-jokes and as close as you'll get to seeing Friel masturbate on stage with a copy of the complete Chekhov in hand (although there are rumours about next year's fringe festival). The references to the characters from the original plays are either nodded at sagely by the audience or laughed at uproariously as if to say "look at me, I get it, I get it". If the original stuff that Friel had come up was any good none of this would have mattered but it is leaden. But the sight of nothing but John Hurt's hairy arse for an hour on a Dublin stage is enough to fill a theatre such is the dearth of good productions.

man. If you had never been to the Irish countryside you might believe that it was riven with mutilations, violent death, psychosis and mental retardation, and you might be right. McCormack's similarly themed short story has here been adapted as a one act play. Dylan Tighe's fabulously energetic performance carries the wordy script well. He plays a culchie metaller, the type you avoid on the bus due to the the cloud of sulphurous stink that surrouds them, their matted hair and Metallica t-shirts stained by eating nothing but egg and coleslaw sandwiches for months on end, stuck in prison after a terrible series of events. The café theatre has made a habit of putting on new material for a lunchtime audience, who they do the good service of feeding as well so a good deal all round.

EN SUITE

BY JOE O'BYRNE
DIRECTOR: DAVID PARNELL
STARRING: MARIA MCDERMOTTROE
PEACOCK, FINISHES 28 APRIL

The flyer informs us that "Joe O'Byrne's hauntingly funny new play...looks at how sometimes secrets and lies are best left unsaid...or are they?" Yes. In this case almost everything should have been left unsaid. The action kicks off with the Mammy of a Bed and Breakfast being driven bonkers by her two daughters - one, the welcome wagon, up the duff after babycham and Italian ham, the other, lord above, a lezzer. The mother rips around the set making awful jokes about pancakes, Germans, Belgians and everything she can think of that begins with the letters B&B. Honest, it's amazing. She's especially fond of saying Bed and Bastard, referring to her illegitimate grandchild. All of a sudden her long lost brother comes home to announce he's going to die. And he's madder than anyone, with a brain tumour that has him ranting about bad things he did before he left all those years ago. And so it goes on, and on. The daughter (who doesn't even turn out to be a real lezzer) has a girlfriend (who does) who's a bit smart for her own good and figures out that the mad uncle has knocked someone off. But who was it? You'll just have to go see it. No, don't, it was a dirty priest who was banging the aul dear years ago. That's right, he was the lezzer's dad!

Writers wanted.
Email us on
arts@theslate.ie

PREVIEWS

THE MATCHMAKER

BY JOHN B. KEANE
DIRECTED BY MICHAEL SCOTT
THE GAIETY FROM 2 APRIL
€14.50-27

A big budget treatment of a play that was on last year in HQ. The plot revolves around letters sent between a matchmaker, his sister and his customers. Expect plenty of style but not much substance.

WOYZECK

BY GEORGE BUCHNER
THE PROJECT CUBE
8-13 APRIL, €12-10

New production of George Buchner's surreal masterpiece that was a big success at the Gaiety earlier this year when Robert Wilson and Tom Waits joined forces.